

A HISTORY OF JEWISH LITERATURE

Volume III

A HISTORY OF JEWISH LITERATURE

Volume III

FROM THE MIDDLE OF
THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY TO 1880

by
MEYER WAXMAN



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TO THE MEMORY OF THE CHOSEN SPIRITS
THE CREATORS OF MODERN HEBREW LITERATURE
AND THE INSPIRED SCHOLARS
Whose Toils and Labors Enriched Our Spir-
itual, Intellectual, and Cultural Heritage
This Volume Is Reverently Dedicated.

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PREFACE

In coming once more before the reading public and prefacing the third volume of *A History of Jewish Literature*, the author believes that he needs neither to apologize for his undertaking of the work, nor to explain its aim and purpose as well as the method of presentation. These things are by now well known to all who perused the preceding volumes, and both the plan and the method of the author were largely endorsed and justified by the reviewers and the readers.

However, some explanations are necessary for several modifications in the original plan and method. First, it became urgent to expand the work still further and add a fourth volume instead of the three previously contemplated. The reason for such expansion is the exceptionally fertile literary activity of the Jews during the Modern Period and the versatility of such expressions. It was found impossible to compress all the manifestations of the Jewish spirit during the last hundred and seventy-five years in one volume, unless such volume were to assume undue proportions. The author thought it, therefore, advisable to devote a separate volume to the literature produced during the last fifty or sixty years, a period which is distinguished by the dominance of one central idea, that of Jewish nationalism, which left its indelible mark upon all literary productions of the age. Second, it is to be noted that while the general *terminus ad quem* of the volume is the year 1880, that limit was occasionally transgressed in the survey of certain phases of literature where an exact temporal division is impossible. This was especially necessary in the presentation of the extent and content of Jewish learning in its various aspects.

The homogeneity and complexity of the literary productions during this comparatively short span of time caused also a modification in the method of presentation. While in the preceding volumes, the author followed closely the method he adopted, namely the treatment of the literature by branches, he deemed it expedient to depart in this volume at times from this procedure and present the many-sided literary activity of certain writers or scholars as a unit rather than to distribute its various expressions under the different branches to which

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they belong. This was thought especially advisable in the survey of the works of the outstanding personalities of the first Haskalah period, as well as in the delineation of the contributions of the moving spirits in the field of Jewish learning during the last century. The monographic method is more suitable to an evaluation of the influence and character of these gifted literati.

The author also wishes to call attention to modification in the transliteration of Hebrew titles and terms in which, with the exception of Biblical names and several titles of books frequently mentioned in the preceding volumes, the more simplified and scientifically more accurate method was adopted. Great care was taken to preserve uniformity in transliteration as far as this volume is concerned, while the discrepancy between the usage in this volume and the preceding ones could, of course, not be remedied for the present. Complete uniformity in the transliteration in the entire work will, therefore, under the circumstances, be attained only in a second edition. It is also to be noted that titles of books in German and French are given in the way they were spelled at the time of publication irrespective of later changes. Due to the fact that the literary centers of the period are comparatively few and well known to every one, the insertion of a map was deemed unnecessary.

The gratitude of the author is hereby expressed to a number of persons and institutions whose services helped him greatly in the preparation of the volume. Such is due to the Hebrew Union College Library of Cincinnati and the Hebrew Theological College Library of Chicago which continuously supplied him with books; to Rev. M. Neuman whose rich collection of Hebrew books furnished the author many a rare volume; to the Hebrew bibliographer, Mr. A. R. Malachi, for lending him a number of letters by writers and scholars to be reproduced in the volume; to his former student, Rabbi L. Mishkin, for his valuable assistance in arranging the bibliography; to his friend, Mr. Isaac W. Jacobson, who is responsible for the compilation of the index; to Mr. Ben Aronin for his many renderings of the Hebrew poetical selections; and finally to his wife who, as heretofore, has read both manuscript and proofs with painstaking care and attention and whose valuable suggestions helped to improve the volume in form.

The following were instrumental in providing the author with a part of the funds necessary for the publication of the volume: Drs. A. K. Epstein, A. E. Abramowitz, and Rabbis L. Lehrfeld and L. Mishkin

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of Chicago, the Central Conference of American Rabbis, Rabbi Philip Graubart of Fort Worth, Texas, and Dr. Charles Shulman of Glencoe, Illinois. His appreciation for their interest in his work is hereby expressed.

MEYER WAXMAN.

Chicago, October, 1936.

PREFACE TO SECOND EDITION

The author, after scanning the contents of the volume carefully, found that it covers the period fairly well and that there is little to add, and as conditions in the printing trade make it exceptionally difficult to reset the entire work, he, therefore, left the text unchanged and did not enlarge it. He corrected only such errors which may cause misunderstanding of some passages, and also added a few notes which bring the information on some points up to date.

Chicago, Dec., 1944

Meyer Waxman

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MODERN PERIOD
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MODERN HEBREW LITERATURE

MODERN PERIOD

DIVISION I

INTRODUCTION

"Life," says Herbert Spencer, "is a continual adjustment of the internal to the external conditions." This dictum applies with equal or even with greater force to the life of the group or of the nation. It is, therefore, impossible for us to understand either the life of any human group at any period in its history or its most vital expression, the literature of the time, without possessing an adequate knowledge of the external conditions to which that life was adjusted or of the world within which it rose and developed. A brief survey of the outstanding characteristics of the modern world is consequently a necessary condition for the proper estimate and understanding of that part of Jewish literature produced in the period of human history which we designate as Modern.

1. *THE MODERN WORLD*

Of the several primary characteristics which distinguish the modern world from the Mediaeval, that of the rise and development of nationalities is by far the most important one. The Mediaeval world knew of no national entities, nor did it have any conception of national cultures. That world was marked by two apparently contradictory characteristics, which yet seemed to harmonize with each other. These were universality and cosmopolitanism on the one hand, and group and class division on the other hand.

For a period of six hundred years, from the eighth to the end of the fourteenth century, the general life of Europe presented a constant striving towards uniformity in its important aspects and manifestations. The ideal of the Church, "one shepherd and one flock," was almost completely realized in life. The various peoples of Europe shared one religion, one medium of cultural expression, the Latin

tongue, as well as the manners and customs of the higher social life. Whatever divisions there were in that world, they were primarily territorial and political. On the whole, life in distant Poland, especially in the upper stratum of society, differed but little from life in France or in England.

From another angle, though, social life in Mediaeval Europe presented a serried line of cleavages. Society in each political segment was divided into several groups, each of which represented a type entirely distinct from the other; nobles, burghers, and serfs embodied three unique forms of life and culture. Moreover, there was isolation between the various parts of each territorial segment or country. Each city had its own laws and customs and its peculiar mode of life, so that consequently the political divisions known as kingdoms were merely aggregates of small city-states. Thus, cosmopolitanism and group division went hand in hand in Mediaeval Europe.

With the beginning of the Modern Period, both these features began to fade and disappear. Slowly the isolated parts of the countries came closer together and ultimately merged into a solidified state. The different languages of the peoples gradually rose into prominence and became media of cultures; literatures were produced which differed not only in language but also in spirit; and even religion lost its universality and became increasingly particularized, assuming a national individuality. Thus, step by step, cosmopolitanism was banished and Europe was no more an aggregate of political divisions, but a group of nations, each with its distinct type of life, culture, and spirit.

Another line of demarcation between the modern and the Mediaeval worlds was the rise of experimental science and the spread of the ideas of progress. These ideas were not entirely unknown in the Middle Ages, but they were superseded by the concepts of authority and of predetermined fixed ends. Things were supposed not to have passed certain stages of development, but both the middle and the final stages were believed to have been determined beforehand by an all-supreme external power. Especially dominant was the notion of authority. It reigned supreme in all fields of intellectual activity, in religion, in philosophy, and in the sciences. Here and there, a daring spirit ventured to experiment in various sciences, but the results of such endeavors were meager, for inevitably he had to bow before the authority of an Aristotle, a Galen, or a Ptolemy.

We cannot describe accurately how this change in the intellectual world came about, but the fact remains that with the dawn of the Modern Period a definite change in the relation of men of intellect to authority became evident. The spirit of criticism was in the air. Men no longer accepted views and opinions merely because they were uttered by the sages of old, but they tested them by their own methods in the light of reason. The ultimate triumph of the Copernican system, creating a complete revolution in man's conception of the cosmos, stimulated many more changes in other fields of science and related intellectual endeavors. Authority fought for its hold upon the human mind, but slowly it gave way, and the spirit of the modern world, which relies chiefly upon investigation and does not view things as predetermined, finally became dominant.

On the social and economic side, the modern world is differentiated from the Mediaeval by the rise of democracy, by the increase of trade and commerce, and by the change in the methods of production of wealth. The effect of the last mentioned factor, often called the industrial revolution, was even greater than the other two.

That the modern world in all its aspects and vicissitudes is a product of the combined results of all these factors goes without saying, for the process of action and reaction is constantly going on, and what are effects today become causes for further change and differentiation to-morrow. Experiments brought about new inventions, causing improvements in the production of wealth and giving birth to modern industry. Expansion of industry in turn strengthened the position of the common man and awakened in him the desire to demand and insist upon his rights; it also created a demand for new markets, which resulted in the exploration of unknown lands, the colonization of distant countries, and the increase of trade and commerce. Thus, the process of concatenation of causes and effects went on until the entire aspect of human life was transformed and a new world, the modern one, came into existence.

It is to this world, with all its changes and vicissitudes, that the Jews, at the beginning of the Modern Period of their history, had to adjust themselves if they were to continue their existence as a distinct group amidst the nations of Europe. And it is from this point of view that both the history and the literature of the Jews during the last two hundred years can best be understood. Only after we grasp the difficulties and the hazards involved in the process of adjustment, which is still going on in our own day, can

we form some estimate of the complexity of Jewish life and activity during the period under discussion and conceive the conditions under which the multifarious movements and their literary expressions arose in Israel. This, of course, necessitates a preliminary statement of the problem of the position of the Jew in the modern world, for a problem it is and a grave one at that.

2. *THE JEW IN THE MODERN WORLD*

The changes and metamorphoses described above affected Jews and Judaism greatly and made their position, to say the least, a precarious one. In the Middle Ages, the Jew was part of the world he lived in. In a society consisting of several groups, each differing from the other economically, culturally, and at times even linguistically, the Jews formed only one more group with its peculiar characteristics. No one saw anything extraordinary in the existence of such a group, and in times of respite from religious hatred and fanaticism, the Jews were even considered an integral part of the general society.

The universalistic, or cosmopolitan, tendency of Mediaeval culture helped to strengthen the equally universal Jewish culture and to solidify the unity of the Jewries of the various countries. The Jews of Europe, and, to a certain degree, all over the world, considered themselves a distinct group, living a complete and unified life.

Of course, there were differences among the various Jewries which, as noted in the preceding volumes, were manifested in the types of literature they produced; but compared to the general uniformity of Jewish life and to the numerous similarities, the dissimilarity fades into insignificance. The different Jewries were united by religion, by language—for Hebrew was understood by all Jews in a greater or lesser degree—by a common mode of life, and by a common type of leadership. Jewish leaders passed frequently from country to country, and were equally respected and obeyed in the lands of their adoption as in those of their birth.

The unity and uniformity of the cultural and spiritual life was fortified by the distinct economic life of the Jews. Because of the restrictions imposed upon them both by the Church and the state, the Jews were forced into certain economic occupations which were considered their province, and they filled a definite place in the economic scheme of all countries. For some Jews, it was money

lending; for others, it was tax farming; for still others, it was the monopoly of inter-country trade or of certain crafts; or, as in Poland, it was acting as the middle-man between the nobles and the other classes of society. The important factor in all these economic activities of the Jews was that they were all adapted to their religious and cultural life. The Jews, excelling in all of them with little competition from their neighbors, could carry on their economic occupations in such a way as to harmonize fully with the other phases of Jewish life.

The Jewish situation assumed a different aspect in the modern world. In a world of nations, each with a well-formed national consciousness, the cultural completeness of the Jewish group and the uniformity and unity of life in the various Jewries were bound to be shattered. In this world, the existence of a group which endeavors to maintain, to all intents and purposes, the properties and qualities of a nation without a land of its own, is a very problematic one. To the outside world, it seems almost an anomaly. The nations in whose midst the Jewries are located resent the distinctiveness of the group, and gradually their cultures encroach upon the autonomy of Jewish spiritual life. Slowly that life becomes permeated with the ideals and views of the majority and a double process of assimilation and adjustment to the environment sets in. This process must inevitably undermine the uniformity and unity of life among the scattered Jewries, so that the types of Judaism in the various countries tend to become widely divergent unless checked by artificial means.

Not less was the havoc wrought in Jewry by the economic changes that have arisen in the modern world. With the increase of commerce and the development of industry, the economic distinctiveness of the Jew broke down. His special fields were entered by competitors or were entirely wiped out through political and economic changes. The growth of industry greatly impaired the status of the small artisans of the ghetto who could arrange their working days and hours to meet the needs of their religious requirements. Similar changes were effected in the business pursuits of the Jews. Without going into detail, it will suffice to say that Jewish activity became a mere cog in the great wheel of the general economic life except for a certain distinctiveness due to governmental restriction in such countries where emancipation was not attained. This life the Jews

cannot control, and as a result, their activity in the economic field often clashes with the spiritual demands of their lives, thus breaking down the pristine completeness and unity.

More grave and serious, however, were the changes which took place, from the beginning of the Modern Period, in the inner consciousness of a large part of the Jews as a result of the influence of the changes in the general intellectual, scientific, and educational status of the nations. The Jews, whose destiny it was to live during the greater part of their history as a nation without a land, were able to do so only by a successful combination of definite factors. A detailed analysis of these factors belongs to a separate treatise on the subject, but we may take brief notice here of the more important of these. The first was the possession of a religion which, by an act of Providence, contained from its very beginning two apparently contradictory phases; namely, a pronounced nationalism, and a deep-seated universalism. The former enabled the people of Israel to construct out of its religion a way of life sufficient for all its needs; the latter afforded it the strength to counteract the effect of the lack of a country in which a nation is supposed to be rooted. Two other factors of value were the hope of redemption and the belief that the Jews are a chosen people, or as we say today, the possession of a superiority complex. All these factors are in reality connected and form one complete whole; the last two beliefs do not arise from national or secular views, but are woven into the fabric of the Jewish religion, and are thus dependent upon each other for their effectiveness and strength.

But no matter how much religion and ideals may influence and mould life, they are in turn affected by life. Judaism, like all religions, is primarily based on authority. We may give different interpretations to that concept, but no matter how attenuated it may become by interpretation, we cannot help but concede to the source from which it emanates the right and power to impose its will upon others. In Judaism, in fact, there are several authorities: the divine, the group, that of the Law, and of the historical tradition. All these are undoubtedly connected and, at times, are merged into one another, yet their effects can be differentiated in life. The power of authority holds sway only as long as certainty and truth are attached to its sources. The moment doubt is entertained about these particular qualities, the force of authority is shaken, even if it continues to be effective in life for some time afterwards.

In the Middle Ages, the mode of living harmonized with the religion of the Jews. Authority, though often rationally interpreted, reigned supreme and the hope for redemption was the bright star in the otherwise overcast sky of Jewry. There was no reason to question the possibility of its realization, persecution and suffering notwithstanding, for the supernatural and miraculous might always occur. Nor was there any reason for the Jews to doubt their superiority over other peoples; they were, on the whole, superior culturally, spiritually, and morally to the mass of peoples in the midst of whom they dwelt. In addition, they had the excellence of their religion and laws. All these factors, acting upon one another, compensated the Jew for his suffering and made the position of Judaism impregnable.

The scene changes at the beginning of the Modern Period in Jewish history, which started about two hundred and fifty years later than that of general history. The development of criticism and the scientific attitude toward matters spiritual in general and religious in particular, undermined authority in all its aspects. The echoes of these new rumblings in the intellectual world penetrated the walls of the ghetto, and skeptical minds began to doubt the principles of the Jewish religion and life. In time, as the walls of the ghetto began to crumble and fall, the rift between those who were inoculated with the new intellectual attitude toward Judaism and those who clung to traditional Judaism became wider.

Similarly, conditions caused the hope for redemption to weaken. The disappointment which resulted after the spasmodic outburst of Messianic movements and the inner attrition accruing to any ideal which is placed for centuries as a goal but is never realized, contributed towards the weakening of the Messianic hope. It still formed an article of the creed, and prayers for its speedy realization were still recited by millions of Jews, but its efficacy in life was little. It ceased, from the beginning of the Modern Period, to inflame the heart and to captivate the imagination. It was no longer compensation for suffering, and the Jew, looking upon exile and his anomalous position in it as a grim reality destined to be continued indefinitely, began seriously to reflect how to harmonize his own life with the one surrounding it.

Life also did not bear out the claims of the superiority of the Jew. Knowledge and science developed, education became more widespread, literatures arose which captivated many Jews by their

beauty, and philosophies appeared which dazzled them by the loftiness of their thought. In the face of these facts, the old superiority complex began to give way, even though the formula of being a chosen people was still repeated by many. On the contrary, signs of a feeling of inferiority became evident. Admiration for the accumulated cultures of the nations permeated the erstwhile inhabitants of the ghetto, and gradually they were engulfed by the currents of European civilization.

As a result of these changes, there arose at the beginning of the nineteenth century among the younger Jews in Western Europe a movement to escape the ghetto, its life and culture; this was the movement of assimilation. But Judaism still had vitality and Jewry still manifested a strong desire to live, and efforts were made to check the process of disintegration. These movements in opposite directions, namely, the one which aims to escape from Judaism and the other which attempts to save the integrity of Judaism and Jewry, constitute the tragedy of the Jew in the modern world. It is a struggle of a group for the right to be a denizen of two worlds, the larger one it lives and acts in, and the smaller one in which it strives to maintain an integrated heritage of the past. The struggle is becoming fiercer as the years go by, but it is not our intention to prognosticate its outcome. We have delineated the position of the Jew in the modern world merely as a basis for the judgment of both the movements that took place in Jewry and the literature that was produced during the last period of Jewish history.

The picture of the anomalous position of the Jew in the modern world would not be complete if we did not take into consideration the strong opposition manifested by the nations to the entry of the Jew into the scheme of the general life and to his endeavor to become an integral part of it. This opposition assumed in the course of the period different aspects. At times, such as at the beginning of the nineteenth century, it expressed itself by refusing to allow the Jews entry into the general world unless they completely renounced their distinctive group-life. At other times, it was manifested by resentment against their excessive participation in general life and in a desire to force the Jews back into the imprisonment of the ghetto. These attitudes evoked correlative movements in Jewry. At certain moments, a part of it was ready to buy the favor of the nations by sacrificing the distinctiveness of Jewish life and by adjusting Judaism to the environment so as to make the difference between the two

imperceptible. At other times, when a general opposition to the Jew ran high, counter-movements arose in Jewry which aimed to strengthen its cultural and spiritual exclusiveness. Thus the struggle of the Jew during the Modern Period was, and still is, of a more complicated and heterogeneous character than the one he had waged during the Middle Ages. Then, the struggle was primarily with distinctive forces from without, namely brute force and blind fanaticism, against which the Jew matched the integrity of his inner life, the strong hope for a better future, and the deep consciousness of a spiritual superiority. In the Modern Period, the will of the Jew to exist battled, and still battles, against disintegrating forces both from within and without, a task infinitely more difficult and arduous.

All what has been said regarding the struggle of the Jew in the modern world and his precarious existence requires some slight modification. The forces spoken of, both the inner and outer, which operated against the maintaining of the integrity of Judaism and Jewry, did not operate with equal vigor either during the entire period or in all Jewries. In general, we draw the line between Western and Eastern Europe. The Modern Period of Jewish history begins much earlier for the Jewries of Western Europe—approximately the middle of the eighteenth century. This was caused by a combination of circumstances, such as the compactness of the Jewish masses in the territories known as the Pale of Settlement, the low cultural state of the Polish and Russian masses, and the peculiar economic conditions of those countries. The result was that the East-European Jewries did not emerge from the status of the Middle Ages until sixty or seventy years later than their brethren of the West. And even later, almost until the very beginning of our own century, the large compact Russian Jewry maintained the inner integrity and intensity of Jewishness, and to a certain degree its creativeness, in spite of the gradually changing environment.

Yet on the whole, even East-European Jewry cannot be said to have entirely escaped the disintegrating effects of the forces described above during the entire period of modern Jewish history. Not only did it make strenuous efforts in the latter part of the period to cope with altered conditions, as evidenced in the Haskalah and the Nationalist movements, but even in the earlier part, there were occasional stirrings which forced that Jewry to adopt measures of resistance to the new spirit. In fact, the persistence in trying to maintain the complete exclusiveness of Jewish life, the effort to shut out the rays

of enlightenment and secular knowledge made by large masses of East-European Jews during the greater part of the nineteenth century only proves the extent of fear that seized them at the approach of an era of change. Moreover, even Ḥassidism, which is fundamentally a religious revival movement quite removed from the spirit of the modern world, was in a way a measure of adjustment on the part of the deteriorated Ukrainian Jewry to a changed spiritual environment. In other words, it was an attempt to substitute an altered form of religious life for an older form which had lost its vitality for various reasons; and so, for a short time, Ḥassidism was thought to be more pliable and more suitable to the needs of the people.

3. *THE GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF MODERN JEWISH LITERATURE*

From what has gone before, we can easily deduce the general characteristics which distinguish the bulk of the literature produced during the Modern Period from that of the Mediaeval. The latter, as we have seen heretofore, was a gradually unfolding expression of a well-stabilized and regulated life. It not only expressed life but created it; for to the Jews, literature took the place of a fatherland and their history is, to a fair degree, a history of literature. Yet there were certain bounds to the extent of the innovations it might have desired to introduce. It worked with a definite set of spiritual, religious, and social values, the validity of which was not questioned. At times, in certain countries and in certain ages, such as in the Golden Age in Spain and later in the Provence, savants tried to improve these values and adapt them to certain definite scientific and intellectual concepts, but they never attempted to change their fundamental character nor alter the primacy of their position in Jewish life. It was because of this limitation that Mediaeval Jewish literature succeeded in being creative in some of its aspects, for it kept close to the elemental spirit of the nation and always acted as its mouth-piece.

Modern Jewish literature in all its aspects is, on the other hand, primarily a record of movements which aimed to adjust Jewish life to a changing environment. The various parts of this literature are attempts by the producers to substitute new forms of spiritual life and new values for the old ones which they claimed had lost their validity. It is, therefore, a revolutionary literature, and as all revolutions, it needed a special combination of circumstances to be effective

and successful. This happy combination, however, was not given to Jewish literature. On the contrary, it encountered many difficulties. The very heterogeneity of Jewish life in modern times was a great obstacle to its success, and the resistance of the great mass of Jews in Eastern Europe to the new spirit with which the literature was permeated, coupled with the diversity of tongues which it employed, formed another stumbling block in the path of the realization of its aims.

Possibly the greatest factor in the retardation of the effectiveness of this literature was that its producers, in their sanguine desire for change and readjustment in Jewish life, did not adapt their new values to the elemental spirit of the people, and thus defeated their own purpose. An ancient people like the Jews, the possessors of an old culture and body of traditions which were expressed in certain definite forms, could not be made to adopt new spiritual values unless these were modified in such a way as to merge easily with those already hallowed by age. The spiritual innovations which the makers of modern Jewish literature intended to introduce were not altered in their content; they were merely borrowed from the outside world and transplanted into the soil of Jewish life with no effort at reshaping. In the case of Hebrew letters which forms the bulk of the Jewish intellectual activity in modern times, these ideas, values, and forms received a Hebrew garb, inasmuch as they were expressed in that tongue but did not undergo any inner change. They are human values and Jews must undoubtedly cultivate them, but whether they should take the primacy in Jewish life in place of the old ones or whether they can help them in their struggle to maintain in some form the entity of the group is indeed questionable.

As a result of all these impediments, the effectiveness and creativeness of modern Jewish literature were to a certain degree curtailed. There is no intention on the part of the writer to minimize the services performed by Jewish and especially by Hebrew literature for the Jewish people and its culture. On the contrary, the new values, such as the renaissance of the Hebrew language and the growth of nationalism which hitherto lay dormant in the heart of the Jew, both of which are to be placed to the credit of this literature, are of inestimable worth. Likewise, the efforts made by the Haskalah literature to call forth the man in the Jew, to draw him out from the exclusiveness and narrowness of the ghetto, to widen his horizon, and to make him appreciate new forms of literary expression, have

considerably enriched Jewish life. But it must be admitted that with all this, modern Jewish literature has failed to create paramount Jewish values which would express the fundamental spirit of the people. It did not make it possible in the hundred and fifty years of its existence for that spirit to make a distinct contribution to the various fields of human knowledge and endeavor which we can label as distinctly Jewish; the contributions of individual Jews to the thought and literature of the nations are general in character with a racial tinge. It failed to elaborate a Jewish view of life and the world or to revitalize the old one. In short, it failed to make the adjustment between Judaism and world culture. The reason for these failures is the reluctance on the part of the moving spirits of this literature to penetrate into the depths of the spirit of Israel and to recognize that it is an inseparable combination of religion, ethics, and nationalism in their essential connotation. Any separation of these elements destroys its unity and impairs its creative power.

Another reason for the failure is the lack of harmony and soul-unity in the personalities of the creators of modern Jewish literature. This, however, is a fault which cannot be laid entirely at the door of the modern writers, for it is inherent in the life of the Jew in the modern world. Every Jew, no matter how richly endowed he may be with intellectual and spiritual gifts, is always under the influence of two cultural traditions, that of his own and that of the country he resides in. Unconsciously he imitates the ideals of the latter culture, even in his creations in the field of Jewish or Hebrew literature. As the Jews lived in different lands, it follows that different types of culture are reflected in their literature, thus impairing its unity. It is true that in modern times the barriers of isolation between nations have been broken down and all literatures show a certain amount of influence of the general currents of thought and taste common to civilized nations, but there is a difference in the degree of influence. In the case of the Jews, the force exerted by the spiritual and intellectual life of the countries they reside in is very strong, and the result is a spiritual conflict in the personalities of the producers of literature. For this reason, the creativeness of modern Jewish literature was prevented from attaining its full development.

From the preceding remarks, we can infer that the character of modern Jewish literature is primarily secular. The center of gravity in Jewish literary productivity has shifted from the religious, legal, and ethical type to the secular. Of course, many works of Rabbinics

dealing with the various phases of Jewish law were produced during the Modern Period. Likewise, a vast amount of homiletic, ethical, and Kabbalistic works was composed in this span of time, but with few exceptions is there anything new or creative in this entire mass of books. With the close of the eighteenth century, Rabbinics had attained the end of its creative period. Whatever could be added to the codes by comment and explanation had already been added, and the laws, even in their rigid form, had already been standardized and completely codified. What followed was a mere spinning of the thread of casuistry and the weaving of a web of distinctions and delicate differentiations which, on the whole, led to no practical results. The same can be said about the books of other types of literature. After the first few Hassidic works in which a new religious note was introduced, those that followed merely dealt with homiletic *novellae* characterized by keen-mindedness but barren in the creation of religious values. Sacred poetry, which was the source of so much religious and national inspiration during by-gone centuries, ceased to be produced altogether, and few original works were written in the field of religious philosophy and ethics. Besides, because of the great changes in Jewish life, these types of literature exerted but slight influence on the life of the people and were of interest only to a small class of scholars.

In modern times, poetry, which forms an important branch of spiritual expression, is entirely secular; the bulk of prose literature, in which the novel and the sketch occupy a prominent place, consists of *belles-lettres*. The essay which deals with problems of current life took its place beside the other types of intellectual activity; and history, science, and sociology became important currents in literary endeavor. There arose also a new type of literature consisting of a heterogeneous mass of studies written in different languages which, for want of a better name, is called "Jewish Science" or *Hokmat Yisrael*. It aimed to be a modern form of the old branches of Mediaeval literature, such as Rabbinics, religious philosophy, ethics, exegesis, and others, but so far, it has formed only a commentary upon the literary heritage of the preceding ages. It has helped to clarify many subjects of Jewish literature of earlier periods but has not created values of its own. It is with these types of literary expression, which are primarily secular and only occasionally tinged with a religious spirit, that the historian of modern Jewish literature is to deal in his survey of the intellectual and spiritual activity during this span of time. However,

in spite of its shortcomings, it is in Jewish literature that the erratic pulse of Jewish life, during this stormy period, is most clearly felt.

4. PERIODS OF MODERN JEWISH LITERATURE

The classification of a literature as diversified and as subject to contrary influences as is Jewish literature is a very difficult task, for the different currents flowing within it often intermingle and cross each other. There is, therefore, no other way left but to follow the path of the main movements in Jewish life during modern times of which literature was to a great extent their expression. Accordingly, we can divide the literature into three periods: (a) the transition, including the first Haskalah movement, (b) the emancipation and the second Haskalah movement, and (c) the nationalistic movement.

The first period, lasting from about the middle of the eighteenth century to 1820, is best characterized by the name of transition, for during that time Jewish life, at least in Western Europe, was gradually transformed from the fixed type of the Mediaeval to that of the Modern one. During that period, the conflict between the old and the new raged; and the old form of life not only showed some resistance, but in Eastern Europe even made important contributions to the realm of the spirit, such as the movement of Hassidism and the type of learning initiated by the Gaon of Wilna. This period, as indicated, is sometimes called the first Haskalah period, for it is characterized by the striving for enlightenment on the part of the Jews of Germany and the first stage in the renaissance of Hebrew literature. But the name "period of transition" is a more inclusive one.

The second period, beginning in 1815 and continuing until 1880, is given a two-fold name, for it includes two movements which took place in the most important Jewish centers, namely Western and Eastern Europe. The movement of emancipation was the prime motive in the life of the Jews in the first center; all other movements and their literary expressions were subsidiary and complementary to it. And though the struggle for emancipation was completed by 1850, the thirty years that followed were still colored by the spirit of the struggle and its resultant tendency towards assimilation; it was only towards the end of the period that a reaction set in against this tendency. In Eastern Europe the Haskalah movement, the counter-part of the emancipation movement, held sway. Its under-

lying motive was also a desire for emancipation, but because of an entirely different combination of circumstances, it was not as pronounced. The Haskalah took a different attitude, a more lenient one, towards the old life, and its effects were, therefore, more satisfactory and more constructive. It has to its credit the creation of an important part of modern Hebrew literature.

The third period, from 1880 to the present day, is permeated by the rising spirit of nationalism. It colors the entire Jewish life, for whether people espouse the cause of nationalism or oppose it they are affected by it. The literature of the period is the fullest expression of the movement. It is a period of great productivity and one during which an attempt is being made to create new values in Jewish life. The renaissance of Hebrew literature reached its highest peak during the first thirty years of that period, and but for the changes wrought in Jewry by the World War and the upheavals in Eastern Europe, the continued spiritual development in the period would have brought great creative results.

To the delineation of the activity in all fields of spiritual endeavor and the literary expressions reflecting the tendencies and movements in Jewish life during these three periods, and to an appreciation of both their failures and achievements, the survey in the following pages is devoted.

PERIOD OF TRANSITION

CHAPTER I

MOVEMENTS AND PERSONALITIES

A. ḤASSIDISM

5. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF ḤASSIDISM

The Modern Period in Jewish history was ushered in by three men whose activities left a lasting influence upon Jewish life and who initiated three great movements in Judaism, the history and development of which make up a large segment of the life story of our people during the period. These men were Israel Ba'al Shem, or as he is usually known, the *Besht*, Elijah Gaon of Wilna, and Moses Mendelssohn. The movements initiated by them were: Ḥassidism, revitalization of Rabbinic learning and leavening it with a scientific spirit, and enlightenment or Haskalah in its first phase. These men differed from each other not only in character and personality, but also represented three different types of Jewish life in the second half of the eighteenth century inasmuch as they hailed from three different centers. The *Besht* typified Jewish life in the Ukraine, the Gaon that of Lithuania, and Mendelssohn that of Germany. An estimate of these great personalities and the movements they initiated cannot, therefore, be complete unless we have some understanding of the environment in which these leaders lived and which formed the scene of their activities. We shall begin with Ḥassidism.

Ḥassidism has been variously judged in the course of its existence. In its early days it was opposed by Rabbinic authorities and branded as heretical. Later the enlightened spirits in Jewry, the Maskilim, fought against it, characterizing it as a reactionary movement injurious to the best interests in Judaism. But *mutatis mutandis*, still later in the nationalistic period, the more emancipated spirits began to hail it as a reform tendency, as a reaction against rigid and barren Rabbinism, as a movement which stimulated new interests in Jewish life and tinged it with a poetic spirit.

Various and opposed as these views are, there are grains of truth in all of them, but the whole truth, of course, differs from each of these views. We shall endeavor to elicit this truth after an examination of the principles of Hassidism. For the present it is important to note that Hassidism, as all movements in modern Jewish history, is an attempt to adjust Judaism to changed conditions, and this is probably the only modern trait in its makeup. True, this adjustment was not of the same type as advocated in West-European Jewry, but an adjustment it was nevertheless.

Jewish life in the great centers of Poland during the sixteenth and the first half of the seventeenth century was, on the whole, complete and unified in its inner arrangement. Spiritually it was on a much higher plane than that of the surrounding population. Learning was not only respected but constituted the *nervus vivendi* of society. The scholar, the Talmudic and religious one, was the ideal social type and each Jewish family strove to raise at least one scholar. Education flourished; almost every Jewish community, no matter how small, maintained a Yeshibah, (Talmudic academy) and the number of students in all the Yeshibot ran into the tens of thousands. Religion was rooted deep in the hearts of the people and their piety was sincere and genuine. There was undoubtedly a certain element of mechanical observance of laws and a perfunctory performance of religious duties, but on the whole, the religious feeling was a living force. The scholars and the rabbis formed a kind of intellectual aristocracy, but the rift between them and the masses was not so great as is often pictured by historians, for there were few Jewish families where there was not at least one aspirant to scholarship, and the number of people entirely ignorant of the Torah was small.

Socially, life was well organized and ordered. Each community was governed by its council or *Kehillah*, and these again were united into district councils, which in turn were subject to the supervision of the "Council of Four Lands,"¹ with jurisdiction in all important matters over all communities in Poland. These councils regulated all inner affairs, such as education, religious matters, and the maintenance of discipline within the communities. In addition, they

¹ The "Council of Four Lands" (Wa'ad Arba Arozot) consisted of representatives, both rabbis and laymen of Great Poland (Congress Poland), Little Poland including Western Galicia, Red Russia, i.e. Eastern Galicia, and Podolia and Wolhynia. Lithuania had since 1623 its own council, which in very important matters cooperated with the Council of Four Lands.

supervised economic relations both within the communities proper and between the Jews and the government, as payment of taxes and similar matters. This strict discipline and supervision often evoked rebellion in the hearts of many individuals who believed themselves wronged, for the councils were not always just, and class sentiment at times vitiated the judgment of the leaders who belonged invariably to the intellectual and the upper stratum of society. But this rebellion never took on any form of organized expression. Generally, the order of life in Polish communities tended towards the preservation of the body of Jewry as an entity endowed with national properties, a fact which partly compensated the Jew for his sufferings.

This situation changed for the worse in 1648-49, the years in which the Chmelnicki massacres took place. These persecutions, which swept over a large part of the Polish Commonwealth, wrought havoc with the Jewry of that country. Many Jewish communities were practically annihilated by the ruthless Cossack bands, and many more were disintegrated by the flight of their members to escape the enemy. The entire Jewish life in that great center was shaken to its foundations. But while the larger communities in Poland proper partly recovered in subsequent years, at least spiritually and intellectually, though never economically, that part of Polish Jewry inhabiting the provinces of Podolia and the Ukraine remained prostrated and the wounds inflicted upon it by the Cossack uprising were never healed.

The Jews of the Ukraine, Podolia, and Eastern Galicia bore the brunt of the massacres. It is estimated that about two hundred thousand Jews were killed in these provinces during the fatal years of 1648-49. And what is worse, sporadic attacks upon Jews continued in those places for a century afterwards, for these were borderlands and rebellions of the Russian peasants, or the *Haidamacks* as they were usually called, against their Polish masters were frequent. Under these circumstances, the change in Jewish life in that part of Poland was great. The social organization was weakened in the larger communities and entirely gone in the smaller ones. The state of education degenerated, the number of Yeshibot diminished, and accordingly the number of scholars dwindled. Learning, though respected, was no more the ideal of the masses, and consequently ignorance increased among them. Moreover, a materialistic spirit began to spread among the Jews. The struggle

for existence, which ensued from the low economic state of the Jews, fostered this spirit and gave it wide prevalence. Many of the Jews of the Ukraine and Podolia lived in villages and many more on the estates of the nobles, isolated or in small groups. Being constantly in the company of peasants to whose needs they catered and being estranged from Jewish environment, they were gradually influenced by the habits and beliefs of their neighbors. Thus a rift was created between the intellectual class and the masses, causing the diminution of the influence of the former, and as a result, some of the masses often strayed from the path of religion by committing, either wilfully or through ignorance, infringements of laws. Such actions widened the gap between the two classes. The members of the intellectual class often looked down upon the masses who differed from them not only in knowledge but also in manners, habits, and dress. These, conscious of the attitude of the learned toward them, could not follow them whole-heartedly though they did outwardly, and consequently there arose a subconscious antagonism on their part towards the learned and the rabbis.

The religious feeling and the sense of piety were, however, very strong in the hearts of the Jewish masses of the Ukraine and Podolia, and these emotions demanded expression. That was found, if not in learning and in the study of the law, in mysticism and superstition. Superstitious beliefs, caused by the spread of the practical Kabbala, were quite prevalent among all Jews of Poland in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but nowhere were they so rampant as among the Jews of the provinces under discussion. Kabbala and mysticism also struck root in these Southern dominions of Poland. On account of their proximity to Turkey, where the Kabbala and its resultant Messianic movement of Sabbatai Zebi flourished during the second half of the seventeenth century, both of these tendencies were transplanted to that soil. All later sporadic Messianic outbursts found a strong echo in those provinces, and at times even originated there, culminating in the heretical Messianic movement of Jacob Frank (1726-1791).

These two allied spiritual currents, the Kabbala and Messianism, often brought about opposite results. The Kabbala, especially the Lurianic type (see Vol. II, Sec. 118) which was the standard one, preached asceticism, while the Messianic tendency always ended in a laxity of observance of the religious precepts and even in licentiousness. This is not the place to enter into a detailed investigation

of the psychological relation between Messianism and laxity in the observance of the law. Suffice it to say that this has been the case from the rise of Christianity down to the movement initiated by Jacob Frank. The lax attitude towards the law on the part of the leaders of Messianic movements and their followers arose partly from their desire to vindicate their claim that a new order of things was about to come or had already come into the world, and partly because they stressed the inner meaning of religion at the expense of its external phase of laws and ceremonies. To these must be added the excessive stimulation of emotion caused by the movements which resulted in an outburst of the elemental passions of man bringing in its wake moral degeneration. This was the case with the Messianic movements from that of Sabbatai Zebi to that of Frank. This particular ugly feature was strengthened by the fact that the Kabbala contains a strong erotic element. (Vol. II, Sec. 106) and its symbolism could be easily manipulated to justify many immoral acts by those who desired to perpetrate them.

Both of these offshoots of mysticism were cultivated in the Southern provinces of Poland, namely, Kabbalistic asceticism and laxity of observance of the law. Of course, the latter was more hidden and less prevalent, but it nevertheless affected Jewish life there. As for the former, it was primarily cultivated by rabbis, scholars, and especially pious men who were called Hassidim even before the time of the *Besht*. The ordinary men of the masses could not follow asceticism in their daily life. Occasionally, some of them were ensnared by the secret Messianic sects which inspired them both with enthusiasm and allowed them libertinism. But the large Jewish masses who were essentially pious and law-abiding kept aloof from them. They had to be satisfied with the most external expression of mysticism, superstition. They believed in the transmigration of souls (*Gilgul* or *Dibbuk*); and of course there were many people who were said to be possessed by the spirits of the dead. Equally numerous were the cases where such spirits were driven out by mystics or wonder-workers. The world was peopled with demons both good and bad and with witches and sorcerers who had the power to injure or to aid men. They also believed that the power of evil in all its manifestations could be overcome by Kabbalistic practices, such as the writing of amulets, incantations, and even by using the smoke of certain herbs.

These practices were naturally performed by the initiated, who

at the time formed a class of professionals. Their general name was *Ba'al Shem* (literally this means the man of the Name, but in a borrowed sense it signifies the man who performed wonders by the mystic use of the name of God or of angels, Vol. II, Sec. 105). The *Ba'alé Shem* were quite numerous in the Ukraine, Podolia, and the neighboring provinces, and they did not necessarily belong to the class of scholars. They were supposed to know some Kabbala, but primarily they were practical men. They, as a rule, were itinerants who visited towns and villages, performed miracles, drove out *Dibbukim*, rid houses of demons infesting them, healed the sick both in body and soul by amulets, herbs, and peculiarly concocted medicines, and generally ministered to the needs of the people.

Such was the world in which Hassidism took rise. It was a Jewish world where the old ideals were no more efficacious, where scholarship had lost its influence to a great extent, where a deep religious feeling vied with ignorance and superstition, and where in addition there was a lurking danger of misguided religious emotion degenerating into looseness of law observance and moral laxity. In this world there arose a man, one of its typical denizens who possessed all its virtues and defects (not the vices); he began his work of adjusting the Judaism he understood and loved to the conditions of the people who professed that religion and introduced into it a new force of vitality which gave comfort to the Jewish masses groaning under the yoke of bitter exile. His work, adapted to the needs of the place and time, soon resulted in a great movement. This man was the founder of Hassidism.

6. ISRAEL BA'AL SHEM

The life of Israel Ba'al Shem, like that of all founders of important religious movements, is encircled with a halo of legend and mystery, and the historian finds himself unable to separate the two elements, that of popular imagination and that of true fact. We possess no authentic biography of the *Besht* nor did he leave any works written by himself. Both the biographical data and the contents of his teachings are to be gleaned from the stories his followers told about him and from quotations found in the writings of his disciples. As regards the first, there are several collections of stories about the life and activities of the *Besht*, the most important of which is the *Shibhē ha-Besht* (The Praises of the Besht) written by a son-in-law of Alexander Shohet, the secretary of Israel, and

published in 1815, fifty-five years after the death of the founder of the sect. This book contains, among many miraculous stories of his life and work, some authentic facts, which when divested of their legendary crust, form the basis of his biography.

From these facts we learn that Israel, the son of Eliezer, a poor but pious Jew, was born about the year 1700 at Okopy, a small town situated on the border of Podolia and Moldavia. His parents died when he was a very young child, and being left without any means of support, he was taken care of by the community. Israel was sent to school, but he often played truant and was frequently found, sunk in thought, wandering alone in the woods. This strange conduct on the part of the youth finally exasperated his well wishers and they left him to himself. He then became an assistant teacher in a *Heder*, or private Hebrew school, where his duties consisted primarily in taking charge of the young children. He was wont to march with them in the winter evenings through the streets of the little town singing snatches of prayers and sacred songs and praying fervently with them. Soon, though, he changed his occupation and became an assistant beadle in a synagogue. Here he distinguished himself by his piety, but he kept aloof from the people and spent many hours in private devotion. It is told that when people were in the synagogue in the late hours of the evening he slept, but he spent the night in study and prayer. At the age of fifteen some good people saw to it that he should be married. His wife, however, died soon after the marriage, and Israel left his native town to settle in a small town near Brody in Eastern Galicia.

Here Israel entered upon the second period of his activity. He had not yet revealed himself as a *Zaddik*, but he played a more dignified role. At first he became a teacher in a communal school, and he acquired a good reputation in the community by his pious conduct. At times he was even asked to serve as a member of the local Jewish court. It was while serving in this capacity that he became acquainted with the father of Gershon Kutover, cantor at Brody. This man had a divorced daughter and he proposed to Israel that he marry her. Israel accepted the proposition on condition that the matter remain secret for a time. Meanwhile the father died, and when Israel presented himself to Gershon Kutover to ask for the hand of the sister, his shabby dress and boorish conduct did not impress the latter favorably. The girl though, consented to be married to Israel, and on his wedding day, he revealed to his

wife his true state, swearing her to secrecy, for the time of his revelation had not yet come.

His brother-in-law, Kutover, who disliked Israel and wanted to be rid of him, bought the couple a horse and wagon and advised them to settle in a village. Israel chose as his home a hamlet in the Carpathian mountains, where he spent most of his time in contemplation among the towering cliffs. From time to time, his wife came to him with the wagon and he filled it with clay which she took to the city to sell. As this occupation yielded him but a meager existence, he later became an inn-keeper in another village. This work, however, was again carried on mainly by his wife, while he spent most of his time in seclusion in a tent on the banks of the Prut. He continued to pose before the people as an ordinary villager concealing from them his scholarship and knowledge of Kabbala. Still later he moved to Tlust, a larger town in Galicia, and again he occupied himself there as a teacher.

Finally the time for the revelation of his identity arrived. According to the story, it occurred in the thirty-sixth year of his life, in 1736, for it had been told to him that it was ordained in heaven that "he be hidden until that time." He then gave up his teaching to become a *Ba'al Shem*, i.e., a healer of the sick and a miracle-worker. He traveled around in villages and towns, cured the sick, wrote amulets, drove out spirits from people and houses, and performed other wonders of a similar nature. Israel must have acquired during his years of seclusion and wandering in the Carpathians some knowledge of the medicinal use of many herbs as well as a familiarity with the simple methods of medicine. This knowledge he employed to advantage in his new profession, for he cured the sick by potions made from herbs, by blood-letting, and by placing leeches on the body.

He was successful in his vocation, and the number of his patients grew. Even Gentiles, among them nobles, applied to him for assistance. His fame, especially as an efficient amulet (Kameo) writer, grew throughout Galicia, Podolia, and the Ukraine so that he had to employ a special secretary, and later even two. We must assume, though, that his fame was not merely based on his professional activity, for there were many *Ba'alé Shem* at the time, but primarily on his personality and conduct. Israel impressed his contemporaries not only by his piety, but by his religious enthusiasm which expressed itself in his mode of prayer, by his generosity, by his sympathetic participation in the sorrows and joys of his fellow-men, and by his

teachings which were rendered intelligible to all by their simple manner.

About the year 1745, the *Besht* entered upon the final stage of his career. He ceased to travel around as a *Ba'al Shem* and moved from Tlust in Galicia to Medzhibozh in Podolia. Here he became the center of a new movement, the adherents of which called themselves by the old name of Ḥassidim. His followers began to increase; from near and far people came to him not only to be cured or helped, but to listen to his teachings. He soon numbered among his followers many scholars and well known rabbis who were to be the apostles and the heads of the movement in later days. The *Besht* died in the year 1759.

These are the simple biographical facts about the founder of Ḥassidism. Legend, of course, was not satisfied with that. It raised his father to the office of prime minister in a foreign land whither he had been taken captive, and described the birth of Israel as a miraculous event, inasmuch as his parents were one hundred years old at the time. Israel himself became a wonder-worker in his early youth, for he killed a sorcerer in the form of a were-wolf who attacked the children in his charge. He was, according to legend, the recipient of mysterious writings sent to him by a holy man, Adam *Ba'al Shem*. During his leadership, he worked many miracles, foresaw the future, traveled long distances in a few minutes, and even resurrected the dead. The imagination of the simple Ukranian Ḥassid was very prolific; all that it could conjecture in the way of miracles it attributed to the hero.

What is important for us in this cycle of legends and stories is the reflection of the *Besht's* character. Although the legends tell in an extremely exaggerated form of his power in performing miracles, he is not pictured as a saint who kept aloof from life and people. On the contrary, his character is depicted as that of a man of the people who typified the best that was in them but also shared to a limited extent their foibles and failings. In his youth he inclined towards asceticism and followed the regulations of the Lurianic Kabbala, but he soon gave it up and initiated his own way, that is, of sanctifying life by participation in it in a proper manner. His conduct, therefore, was that of a man of the people; like them, he enjoyed drinking wine and he was a good judge of its quality; he liked good horses and frequently he went around at fairs examining

specimens with the interest of an experienced horse dealer. He thus could mingle freely in the company of farmers, inn-keepers, brewers, and tradesmen of the towns and villages, who formed the bulk of the Jewish population in the Southern provinces of Poland.

And just as he did not rise much above the common people in his manner of life, it seems that he did not excel them greatly in intellectual equipment. Israel was undoubtedly well acquainted with the Talmud and Rabbinics, but he was not considered a Rabbinic scholar. His interest did not lie in that direction. The method of keen analytic study, known as *pilpul*, popular in his day, was strange to him. He was a student of the Kabbala, but he did not penetrate its speculative depths, being more immersed in its practical and spiritual side. He was well read in the ethical literature of the Middle Ages, by which he was greatly influenced; he must also have studied the Jewish philosophical works but he did not imbibe their ideas, for they are barely traceable in his teachings. Although it is told that the *Besht* was wont to study Saadia's books and that he even claimed to possess the soul of that Gaon, the rationalism of Saadia evidently was not inherited by him. As a result, there was no intellectual gulf between Rabbi Israel and the people. He believed in all they believed, sharing their views and even their superstitions.

The principal trait in the character of Rabbi Israel was his exceptionally deep religious feeling. The religious emotion penetrated his whole being; it was the alpha and omega of his soul. If ever the title "God-intoxicated," so frequently misused, could be applied to any man, it should be bestowed upon the *Besht*. To him the words of the Psalmist, "I place God before me always" (Ps. XVI, 8) were no empty formula, but literal truth. He was always in the presence of God, no matter what he was doing. His strongest desire was union with him (*Debekut*). It was the prime passion and motive in his life, and it expressed itself in concentrated thought, devotion, study, and prayer.

Next to his love of God was his love of Israel, not the abstract love of the people as a whole, but a love for each Jew no matter how humble and how simple he might be. The *Besht* opposed and hated the Frankists—though he did not participate in the dispute with them—and yet when he heard of their conversion, he cried bitterly and said, "Every Jew is an organ of the *Shekinah* (Divine presence); as long as the organ is joined to the body, no matter how loosely,

there is still hope that it will become healthy, but when the organ is cut off, there is no more hope for it.”²

This love was expressed in his conduct towards the poor, to whom he was very generous in the distribution of his money. Towards the end of his life, Rabbi Israel was enriched by his followers, but all the money given him he distributed among the poor. He once turned to his young son who looked enviously upon some silver and gold vessels in the house of a neighbor and asked, “You undoubtedly would like your father to possess such things?” And when the son admitted the desire, he replied, “But I would sell them and give the money to the poor.”³ This trait is especially manifested in the following story: Once the *Besht*, about to depart on a journey, ordered the horses to be harnessed, but he decided first to recite the prayer of *Kiddush Lebanah*, (sanctification of the moon). While reciting the prayer together with a friend, Israel persistently prevented him from turning around to watch the horses. When later pressed for the reason of his action, the *Besht* explained that he saw a thief stealing the bridles from the horses and did not wish to have him disturbed, for the thief stole them to procure food for his family for the Sabbath. Israel later redeemed the bridles from the man to whom they had been sold.⁴

If we add to all these traits the profound belief of the *Besht* in the efficacy of prayer and in the power of the *Zaddik* who communes with God, we shall understand better his teachings and their effectiveness. The *Besht* believed with his whole heart that the man who is near to God can perform miracles and wonders. To him there were no fixed forms of nature, all being the expression of the will of God. It is, therefore, not to be marvelled at that things could be changed at the behest of that will. Israel believed in his own power to foretell the future, to see at a distance, and even to change the decree of a man's fate. He believed in this power not because of pride, for he was humble, but because it was a part of his philosophy, for had he not striven with all his might to cling and to commune with God whose will is all-dominant?

With the passing of years and with the increase of his followers and disciples, the belief of the *Besht* in his own value and mission was strengthened; and, as all founders of religious movements, he

² *Shibhē ha-Besht*, ed. Lemberg, 1903, p. 27.

³ *Ibid.* p. 35.

⁴ *Ibid.* p. 40.

began to think of his teachings as the only means of salvation for the individual and the nation. In a letter sent to his brother-in-law, Gershon Kutover, who settled in Palestine in the year 1746, the *Besht* related to him a visionary ascension to the upper spheres and a visit to Paradise. He told him that he met the Messiah and asked him when he was coming. The answer was, "When thy teachings will spread throughout the world and more Jews will be able to rise spiritually, then the time of redemption will arrive."⁵

These, then, are the traits of the *Besht's* character, a soul-gripping religious emotion, an intense love of God and Israel, a stirring desire for complete union with God, a firm belief in the power of that union, and confidence in his own mission. Of course, they do not tell the entire story of the *Besht* and his activities, but at least they afford us a glimpse into his soul. Another phase, and a very important one, is revealed by the teachings of the *Besht* and his followers, which will be discussed in the following pages.

7. THE PRINCIPLES OF HASSIDISM

Hassidism, primarily an emotional movement, could not have formulated a systematic expression of its views and thoughts. Its teachings came forth from the mouths of its founders in sporadic expressions, aphorisms, remarks, and interpretations of Biblical verses or Agadic statements. Yet even these could have been collected and arranged in some kind of system, but unfortunately this was not done. The *Besht* himself left no writings, but his disciple, Rabbi Jacob Joseph of Polonnoye (d. ca. 1775), wrote the first Hassidic work called *Toldot Yacob Yoseph*, in which he incorporated fragments of his master's teachings. Likewise, the successor of the *Besht*, Dob Baer of Mezherich (1710-1773), known as the *Maggid* (the preacher), did not leave any written work, but his sayings were collected by his disciples under the title *Likkutim* (Selections). The later leaders of the movement wrote many books, but these were primarily homilies with a Kabbalistic-mystic background. In general, we can say that, with the exception of two minor tendencies which will be discussed later, there is only one standard type of Hassidism which goes back to the teachings of the *Besht*. His disciples and their successors, though they wrote numerous works, added little if anything to the original. Even the *Maggid*, who was a greater scholar than the *Besht* and who attempted to inject a more

⁵ Abraham Kahana, *Sefer-ha-Hassidut*, Warsaw, 1922, pp. 73-77.

speculative tone into his teachings, improved only the form and not the content. On the whole, the same thoughts were repeated by most of the writers in slightly varying forms. We shall, therefore, present these general principles as common to Hassidism as a whole, regardless of whether they are based on utterances by the *Besht* or by the *Maggid* or by any other teacher.

From the outset, we shall say that Hassidism, in spite of its popularity, did not introduce any new fundamental ideas into Judaism, nor can it be credited with a spiritual revaluation of Jewish beliefs as some of its modern admirers claim as its achievement. All comparisons of Hassidism with Essenism or other early religious movements that some writers on the subject make are, to say the least, misleading. It operated with ready-made materials which can easily be traced to their sources; its two progenitors are the Kabbala, especially the Lurianic phase, and the pietistic-ethical tendency in Jewish thought and life. Hassidism threw new light upon old teachings, and it introduced into them a current of vitality which made them factors in the every-day life of its followers. This is in itself a significant contribution and it is sufficient to establish the greatness of the movement without having recourse to exaggerated attributes. We shall now proceed to examine systematically the principles underlying the view of Hassidism.

i. GOD AND THE WORLD

In Hassidism, as in all religious movements, the concept of God and His relation to the world forms the axis upon which the movement turns. It has in reality, however, little to say specifically about the idea of God and His attributes, for this is primarily a problem of philosophical thought and Hassidism has little to do with philosophy; the spring-motive of Hassidism is religious emotion, and it never questions the ideas it has received from its progenitors. Likewise, it says almost nothing about the problem of the creation of the world. On this subject, it accepts the views of the Kabbala, which were outlined in the preceding volume (Vol. II, Sec. 109). It is, however, doubtful whether the founder of Hassidism really believed in the theory of emanation, according to which the world of matter is an extension of the Godhead, a view expressed in the Kabbala in a modified form. He certainly cannot be called a Pantheist though several modern historians bestow that title upon him; such a belief would involve the *Besht* and his followers in a denial of creation or

in speculations too subtle for them. What the *Besht* took from the Kabbala and made the very essence of his soul is the feeling of the reality of the presence of God (the *Shekinah*) in every particle of the world, animate and inanimate. The relation of God to the world is not through the mediacy of the laws of nature as the philosophers would have it, but it is direct and immediate.

Says the *Besht*, "The *Shekinah* permeates all four orders in nature (literally *Olomot*, worlds): the inanimate things, the plants, the living beings, and man; it is inherent in all creatures in the universe whether they are good or bad."⁶ Again, "God, blessed be He, fills the entire world with His glory, and every movement, even every thought, comes from Him."⁷ And again, "If you observe a beautiful woman, think whence comes this beauty, and you must confess that it comes through divine power; it follows then that this power is the source of beauty. Likewise, in the inanimate there is a kind of vitality (*Hiyyut*), for we see that it exists and possesses a staying power; it follows then that everywhere there is the inner divine vitality."⁸ Says the *Maggid*, "Whatever a man does, he does so only through the divine power of vitality permeating him. On meeting his fellow-men, he simultaneously perceives their image, hears their voices, understands their speech, and conceives their wisdom; but all these acts are realized through the same vital force emanating from God."⁹ The same idea is expressed more forcibly by a third leader of Hassidism, Sheneor Zalman of Ladi, the disciple of the *Maggid*, when he says: "All that man sees,—the heaven, the earth, and all that fills it—all these things are the external garments of God, and by observing them, man recognizes the inner spirit, that is, the divine vital force which permeates them."¹⁰

These statements are undoubtedly somewhat misleading in their language and may, if one so desires, lend themselves to a pantheistic interpretation. In fact, not only modern interpreters of Hassidism attribute to it such a leaning, but its opponents in early times had done likewise. The Gaon of Wilna, the vigorous fighter against the spread of the movement at the end of the eighteenth century, accused its founders of heresy on the basis of such statements. Yet, if we penetrate deeper into their meaning, we find that they con-

⁶ *Toldot Ya'akov Yoseph*, p. 25.

⁷ *Keter Shem Tob*, p. 20.

⁸ The Testament of the Besht (*Zawa'at ha-Ribash*), p. 18.

⁹ *Likkutei Amorim*, p. 5.

¹⁰ *Tanya*, Ch. XLII.

tain nothing beyond the idea that God, or rather His power, figuratively known as the *Shekinah*, is actively manifested in every part of the universe at any time. In other words, God is the inner reason for the existence of everything in the world. Hassidism does not concern itself with the difficulties such a view involves, but it wants to emphasize that we are always in the presence of God.

That this is the real meaning of all the semi-pantheistic utterances is evident from statements made both by the *Besht* and Sheneor Zalman. Says the former: "I trust in God who created by His mere word all the worlds from nothing, and extends to them His providence in supplying them with influence and vitality; and I trust that He will endow me with power to withstand the evil *Yezzer* in all his persuasions."¹¹ This shows clearly that the founder of Hassidism was as far from pantheism in any form as any pious Jew. Sheneor Zalman, in a letter to the leaders of the Wilna community, the center of the opposition to the movement, says distinctly: "All the accusations by the Gaon against the utterances of the *Maggid* which speak of God as residing in material things are baseless. These statements are not to be taken literally, but only mean to indicate the extent and intensity of God's providence."¹² The pantheism of Hassidism is nothing else but a profound feeling that God is not merely a first cause or a power dwelling in heaven, but one who is constantly present and active in the world in all its parts, high and low, and with whom one can come in immediate relation.

ii. PROVIDENCE

This central view of Hassidism is complemented by the view on providence. In fact, the latter flows out of the former. Divine providence is complete and all-embracing. Says the *Besht*: "Man must think that all things in this world are permeated by the power of God; and all things accomplished through the thoughts of men, even the slightest of them, are done through His providence. It does not matter, therefore, whether the desire of a man is carried out or not, for God knows that it is better that it should not have been realized."¹³ In another place he says: "The *Shekinah* permeates all stages of life from the highest to the lowest. Even when man commits a sin, the *Shekinah* is in him, because otherwise he could not

¹¹ Testament of the *Besht*, p. 8.

¹² *Iggeret Sheneor Zalman*, reprinted in the *Bet Rabbi* (containing the biography of the first three *Zaddikim* of the *Habad* faction), Pt. I, Ch. XII.

¹³ Testament of the *Besht*, p. 15.

have carried out the act nor moved any organ, for it is God who endows man with vitality and power."¹⁴ In a similar strain speaks the *Maggid* when he says, "In every movement of man there is the Creator, for no move can be made without His power. There is therefore a divine manifestation in all human deeds even in the evil ones."¹⁵

This view involves, of course, many difficulties in regard to human freedom for it jeopardizes the precious gift of Judaism. If every move and act is caused by God, how then can man be a free agent? But the founders of the movement were not philosophers, and contradictions formed no obstacles to them. What they aimed to emphasize was that man must be aware of God at all times and that He in His mercy will overlook man's weakness and will forgive his transgressions, because even these can only be done with the aid of His power.

We must, however, be on guard not to construe these utterances as a sanctification of sin, as was done by several of the neo-Hassidim who saw in this movement a reflection of the recent tendencies to glorify passion and consider its fulfillment an expression of human freedom. Hassidism meant only to sanctify human life; by its view of the divine presence in the world and God's all-embracing providence, it meant to comfort the sinner with the knowledge that he is never forsaken by God. Thanks to these views, Hassidism acquired the character of a folk-religion which the common man could grasp and understand. It taught that simple things and plain utterances may have deep inner meaning, for divine power is in everything and can manifest itself in everyday affairs and events. A story told of the *Besht* illustrates his search for the inner meaning of words. Once, the story runs, the *Besht* was in his house discussing important matters with several disciples. A peasant, whose occupation was the repairing of barrels, called through the window to ask whether he had any barrels for repair. "None," answered the *Besht*. "Ay," rejoined the hoop-maker, "search well and you will find things that need repair." "Ah," said the *Besht* turning to his disciples, "the voice of God speaks through the mouth of the hoop-maker. Let each one of us search his soul well and we shall always find things to improve."¹⁶ Such hidden meaning Hassidism tried to inject into the speech of common people and into daily

¹⁴ *Keter Shem Tob*, p. 22.

¹⁵ Statement by the *Maggid* included in Testament of *Besht* p. 26.

¹⁶ *Zweifel, Shalom Al-Yisrael* Pt. III, p. 70.

events. All things may remind one, according to the *Besht*, of his duty and real purpose in life.

iii. THE VALUE OF MAN AND HIS STRIVING FOR UNION WITH GOD

That the ultimate destiny of man is to attain a union with God is not only an important principle of Ḥassidism but is its soul and essence. In order to grasp the full significance of this conception, however, we must first understand the important position man assumes in the teachings of the Kabbala. This mystic system, as we have seen (Vol. II, Sec. 110), raises man to the highest place in all creation. Not only is he its very purpose,—an idea also found in Mediaeval Jewish philosophy,—but he reflects in his own being all the worlds. His body is an image of the lower world, while his soul is a reflection of the *Sephiroth*. By the combination of body and soul, man symbolizes the unity of the lower and upper worlds. His purpose in life, then, is not only to recognize God in creation but to endeavor to unite with Him, the source of all life. It is this teaching of the Kabbala which Ḥassidism emphasizes and applies to life. Man, says Ḥassidism, must strive all his life to unite with his Creator, and by this endeavor to reach the very source of life.

This union with God is reached by purity of soul and concentration of thought. "Man," says the *Maggid*, "can attain communion with God when he endeavors to rise to the upper worlds and removes his thoughts from the lower things."¹⁷ This concentration of thought does not mean an aloofness from life, but, on the contrary, it is to be carried out in the performance of daily tasks. It is directly connected with the penetration to the inner meaning of things by breaking through the external shell of outward appearances. It thus brings us to a view of the sanctification of life, wherein the fulfillment of material desires is considered a means for the achievement of communion. The psychology employed by the founders of the movement has misled some of its modern interpreters to claim for it an exaltation of materialism and an attachment of importance to the realization of passion. The facts, however, are not so, as can be seen in the explanation of this point by one of the noblest spirits of Ḥassidism. Rabbi Levi Yizḥak says, "Man is to find a way for the worship of God (*Abodat ha-Boré*) in all acts of life. When man desires some material thing, such as money or honor, he should reason thus: If my desire to attain a material thing, which

¹⁷ *Or Torah*. p. 58.

is passing and ephemeral, is so strong, how much more ought I to desire to worship God who is an eternal being and the source of lasting pleasure?"¹⁸ Desire and passion are thus made a means for communion with and devotion to God. We see, then, that while contemplation is the essence of that communion, for it is the reflection of the *Shekinah*, union with God can still be accomplished in more simple and common ways of life.

Communion with God, of course, cannot be attained without enthusiasm and ecstasy. These qualities can be developed in two ways, by the study of the Torah and by prayer. Hassidism does not minimize the value of study, and certainly not of the Torah. On the contrary, the *Maggid* says, "God has concentrated Himself in the Torah."¹⁹ The *Besht* also spoke of the value of study and admonished his disciples to concentrate upon the content of their study if they wish to attain communion with God. But still it introduces a major modification in its purpose, which forms a dividing line between the Hassidim and other Rabbinic Jews. To Hassidism, study of the Torah is not important for the knowledge of the laws and precepts it affords, but merely as a means of inspiration. To it, like to the Kabbala the teachings of which Hassidism adopted, the letters of the Torah have a mysterious power, and by repeating them with enthusiasm that power is transmitted to man and exalts him. Hence there has ensued in Hassidism, consciously or unconsciously, a shifting of values in the attitude towards scholarship and intellectual activity. Because Halakah is difficult and requires mental exertion, the *Besht* admonished his followers to study mainly ethical and pietistic works and to limit their study of the Talmud and codes to a minimum. He even taught that the evil *Yezer* persuades man to study the Talmud with all its commentaries in order to prevent him from following other studies which might lead him to the fear of the Lord.²⁰ The *Maggid* also advises one not to devote himself too much to study. "The earlier generations," he says, "were of a different stamp, but we will not attain communion with God in this manner."

The change of values in Jewish life which was introduced by Hassidism was bound to bring grave results and ultimately to engender strong opposition to the movement. It was, though, adapted

¹⁸ *Kedushat Levi*, p. 9.

¹⁹ *Or ha-Emet*, p. 15.

²⁰ Testament of Besht, p. 23.

to the unique conditions of life of the Jews in the Southern provinces of Poland. To them, as was pointed out, the study of the Torah, which involved intense intellectual activity, was difficult; another way, one within the reach of the common man, had, therefore, to be found. Hassidism, turning to prayer as the principal means of religious communion with God, supplied this means.

IV. PRAYER

Hassidism places prayer in the center of its religious life as prayer is, according to the view of its adherents, the surest road to communion with God and because it generates the desired religious fervor. It is said in the name of the *Besht*: "Man must concentrate his entire heart and mind on his prayers, and he must immerse the very life of his soul in each word he pronounces."²¹ "Each word," he says in another place, "is a living entity and must be pronounced with the entire spiritual force one is capable of, or otherwise it will be deficient."²² The *Maggid* called prayer a union with the *Shekinah* and he taught that one must rise to such a degree of ecstasy while praying so that he become entirely forgetful of his corporeality. This kind of prayer elevates man and brings him nearer to God. The road to this union is open not only to the learned but also to the common man and the ignorant, for the knowledge of the meaning of the words is of no importance. What matters is the depth and intensity of religious emotion expressed in worship by the whole-hearted desire of the one who prays to approach his Maker. Hassidism tells many stories of prayers uttered by simple men which penetrated the upper worlds, even to the very throne of God.

The founders of the movement placed the main emphasis on the inner meaning of prayer (*Kawanah*), and did not insist that it be couched in words and expressed in a definite formula. On the contrary, the silent prayer, the one absorbing the entire soul of man while the body does not participate at all, is still more exalted. Yet such prayers are rare and only few can offer them. Means of arousing enthusiasm in the worship of God by the more usual mode of prayer, that of words, must therefore be found. Accordingly, Hassidism urged that prayer be accompanied by great ecstasy displayed in bodily movements, in song, and often even in dance. These represent the effusion of the religious emotion in its fullest degree.

²¹ Quoted by Rabbi Baruch the grandson of the *Besht* in his name—cited in *Hessed le-Abram*, Section of *Nizabim*.

²² Testament of *Besht* p. 6.

Prayer is not only the strongest religious expression and the surest way for communion with God, but, according to Ḥassidism, it is efficacious and exerts a considerable influence on human life and destiny. In order to grasp the full meaning of its power, however, we must refer briefly to several Kabbalistic concepts which were discussed above (Vol. II, Sec. 118). According to one of the doctrines of Luria, known as "the breaking of the vessels" (*Shebirat ha-Kelim*), the seven lower *Sephiroth* because they could not contain the divine light or influence flowing through them from the upper *Sephiroth*, broke. Through this process, sparks of holiness scattered in the universe and were mixed with evil. Likewise, on account of the sin of Adam, the soul of man became mixed with evil, and hence it is in need of constant purification. All the sparks of holiness scattered in the universe and in the souls of men need redemption or improvement (*Tikkun*) in order to enable them to ascend to their source.

This process of ascension and redemption is carried on primarily by prayer. The *Zaddik*, who communes with God, redeems the holy sparks from their imprisonment in evil and achieves the improvement (*Tikkun*) for sinful souls by his prayers. "In prayer," says a disciple in the name of the *Besht*, "man rises to the stage where there is no veil between him and God, where even his profane thoughts become sanctified, for even in such thoughts there are sparks of holiness which mixed with them when the breaking of the vessels occurred."²³

The efficacy of prayer, though, is not limited to this aspect alone but extends to all life. Ḥassidism, like the Kabbala, places great emphasis on the power of man. Man can effect changes in the world by his conduct, for the very workings of the *Sephiroth* (Vol. II, Sec. 110) depend upon it. Hence by the right kind of prayer we can effect changes in the life of every man, for everything depends upon the will of God. Ḥassidism, therefore, believes that by prayer we can cure the sick, bestow riches upon the poor, and avert all kinds of evil. The power, however, is not given to everyone, for only few attain that high degree of communion with and nearness to God which can be applied for practical purposes. This is only the share of the select. We thus come to the evolution of an important principle and to a still more important institution in Ḥassidism.

²³ *Toldot Ya'akov Yoseph*, pp. 1, 17.

V. THE ZADDIK

Ḥassidism, as we have seen, was primarily a popular movement. It aimed to draw the common man within the circle of deep religiosity. Yet, strangely enough, it was this very movement which evolved a type of a spiritual aristocrat on whom it bestowed extreme and unlimited powers. This type was the *Zaddik*, the holy man. True, it modified his conception and made him subservient to the needs of the masses; nevertheless he was a distinct type. To a certain extent, the evolution of the *Zaddik* was a necessary consequence of the teachings of Ḥassidism. The social ideal of Rabbinic Judaism, scholarship, was easily attainable, for almost anyone could become a scholar, if not by the possession of special mental capacities, then by assiduous study. But when Ḥassidism insisted upon cultivating complete communion with God or upon an immersion in the Godhead, the aspect changed. Anyone may possess deep religiosity, but very few can acquire that degree of devotion, that power over the lower world. Hence the *Zaddik* came upon the scene.

The *Zaddik* was not a new phenomenon in Judaism. The Talmud had already endowed him with great power, saying, "God issues a decree, but the *Zaddik* can annul it."²⁴ As for the Kabbala, we have seen above (Vol. II, Sec. 110) how much power it bestowed upon the initiated and pious man. But nowhere had he attained as much power as in Ḥassidism. According to it, he is the mediator between the upper and the lower worlds. "The *Zaddik*" said the *Besht*, "is the messenger of the *Shekinah*." He is the paragon of perfection and the superman who endeavors with all the power of his soul to unite with God, and this effort does not cease even for a moment during his entire life. His function is to reveal the divine manifestation in the world even in material things, for which reason his power is great, for he brings about the favorable activity of the *Sephiroth*. The *Maggid* therefore said, "The will of the *Zaddik* agrees with the will of God."^{24a}

Had Ḥassidism stopped at that, it might have made a distinct contribution to religious life by evolving a noble type of religious man. But Ḥassidism endowed the *Zaddik* with practical functions, and made *Zaddikism* hereditary, bestowing it upon the descendants of saintly men without requiring from them the same qualifications

²⁴ Talmud B. *Moed Katon*, p. 16.

^{24a} *Or-Torah*, p. 13.

but merely giving it to them as a birthright. *Zaddikism* thus degenerated into a kind of a cult.

The *Besht* advised the people to follow the *Zaddik*, for his merit would save them from evil. His disciples went further and made him the mediator between the people and God. Jacob Joseph states, "The *Zaddik* is the soul and the vital power of the world; the rest of the generation is like the body, which is the garment of the soul. He is the channel through which the divine influence flows to the common people who make up the body of Israel."²⁵ He became thus not only the head of the other *Hassidim* but their absolute master. He was supported by them and his word was to be law to all. He was the arbiter not only in religious matters but in practical and secular affairs as well, for he could bestow blessings and avert evils. Because *Zaddikism* became an hereditary institution the number of *Zaddikim* consequently increased, and several dynasties were set up in different localities. Only the *Besht* and his disciple, the *Maggid*, reigned supreme in the *Hassidic* world. With the death of the latter, his disciples set up separate leaderships; and since they also had descendants, the number of schools and dynasties multiplied considerably.

Moreover, a theory was set up which was the logical culmination of principles stated earlier in this discussion, namely, that the *Zaddik*, one of whose functions is to restore the sparks of holiness (*Nitzotzot Shel Kedushah*) scattered in the material world to their source, must himself descend in his conduct in order to be in contact with these imprisoned sparks. "The *Zaddik*," says Jacob Joseph, "must himself possess a particle of uncleanness (*Tumah*) so as to be able to join with the common and gross man in order to raise him to a higher state."²⁶ This theory, which from a certain angle could have been beneficial to the movement, was wrongly interpreted and it produced disastrous results. The *Zaddik* was raised above criticism, and a holy and mystical motive was imputed to all his actions. He might have been greedy and devoid of spirituality in his pursuit of the pleasures of this world, but this did not matter, for he could not be criticized; his actions had to be interpreted as an attempt on his part to redeem the sparks of holiness imprisoned in material things and to restore them to their source. It is not for us to follow the development of *Zaddikism* throughout its devious ways, for

²⁵ Toldot Ya'akov Yoseph, Introduction, also in sections of *Bereshit* and *Yitro*.

²⁶ Ibid, p. 40.

such a discussion belongs primarily to a history of the movement. We have only indicated its place in the general scope of Ḥassidism as a whole.

We have thus surveyed the important principles of Ḥassidism which contributed to its success. It remains for us to consider its attitude towards life, which though not a principle in itself, still was greatly emphasized by the teachers and contributed much towards enhancing the value of the movement.

vi. JOY OF LIFE

The attitude of Ḥassidism towards life was entirely different from that of the Lurianic Kabbala whose mental child it was to a certain degree. It emancipated itself from the gloomy asceticism which the former taught and advocated joy in life. This attitude was a result of the teachings of Ḥassidism, namely that the divine presence permeates everything, even things apparently bad, and that man's trust in God and His mercy must be implicit and whole-hearted. The *Besht*, therefore, constantly admonished his disciples not to weep in prayer but to worship God in a joyful spirit. He said that physical joy is a medium for the joy of the soul, for "sadness of the body is an obstacle to the communion of the soul with God."²⁷ His disciple, Jacob Joseph, said in his name, "When a man has committed a transgression, he should not be sad on that account, for this would only diminish his worship of God, but he should forget about it and resume his rejoicing in God." He further said, "Man should know that in all human anguish, whether corporeal or spiritual, there is a spark of the divine, except that it is covered, but when he becomes aware of that, the cover is removed and the force of the anguish is broken."²⁸

Thus, Ḥassidism urged joy of life under all circumstances and even considered enjoyment as a means of worship. This attitude greatly influenced Ḥassidic life, and was expressed in the general cheerfulness marking the congregations of Ḥassidim, in their love of song and dance, and in their comparatively happier outlook upon life. This phase had, also, of course, its dark shadows, but of this later.

²⁷ Testament of the Besht, p. 9.

²⁸ *Toldot*, p. 59b.

8. *HABAD AND BRATZLAV TENDENCIES IN HASSIDISM*

Our survey of the essence of Hassidism as a spiritual and religious movement would be incomplete if we were not to take account of two tendencies which manifested themselves in it during the course of the first period of its development and which deviated in a degree from the main currents of the movement. The more important of the two was the one known as the *Habad* (initials of *Hokmah*, *Binah*, and *Da'ath*, i.e. Wisdom, Understanding, and Knowledge) type of Hassidism. The promulgator of this tendency was Rabbi Sheneor Zalman (1748-1813) of Ladi, a town in the Russian province of Moghilev. Sheneor Zalman, a native of the Northern provinces of Poland, where Jewish scholarship was still the ideal of the masses, and a man of great Talmudic erudition, could not entirely agree with the Ukrainian or the *Besht* type of Hassidism, which catered to the religious demands of the masses and neglected those of the intellectual class. He, therefore, sought for a way to modify the teachings of the founder and to adapt them to the level of the learned and scholarly. Besides, Sheneor Zalman was a thinker, and, though not schooled in philosophy, he possessed a sense for system and order in religious contemplation.

In Sheneor Zalman's teachings given in his book *The Tanya* (so called after the first word with which the discussion begins), the quasi-panteistic view of the relation of God to the world, contained in the cryptic sayings of the earlier teachers, is expressed more clearly and is given a more definite form. The world, he teaches, was created by the word of God, but this word is not to be understood as a word of command, but only in the sense of an emanation of power, or as he chooses to express it, an emanation of His light. This light or essence of existence of things continues forever in all things in the world. "His work," says Sheneor Zalman, "is not like the work of man, who creates a vessel and with its completion ends his relation to it. Nay, the power of God permeates His creatures. Were it to be removed from them, all things would turn to nothing."²⁹ In other words, God is the staying power of everything that exists, even of inanimate things as rocks and stones. To the question of how the infinite power of God can be the indwelling force of finite and limited things, the rabbi gives no clear answer but

²⁹ *Tanya, Shaar ha-Yihud*, Ch. II.

he supports his view by the Kabbalistic theory of the "concentration of divine light." (*Zimzum*, see Vol. II, Sec. 109.) He does not explain how the concentration took place, but merely says that the light of God went through many stages of coverings and limitations until it could bring into existence the limited creatures.

The light of God, or the divine power of vitality dwelling in all things, is covered up by their external form, and for this reason we see them as though they had an independent existence. Moreover, there is apparently a well-ordered independent conduct in the world which we call nature, but even nature is only a cover for the divine inner force. The force is, according to Sheneor Zalman, symbolized by the divine name of *Elohim*, which signifies His ability to conceal Himself and remain hidden. Hence, it is said that the letters of the word *Elohim* are numerically equal to those of the word *Teba*, nature, each equaling eighty-six. Nature, in its orderliness and regularity, is the great cover for the indwelling power or light of God in the world. The rabbi thus came to acknowledge the existence of nature in a higher degree than his predecessors, to whom its laws had no meaning at all. There is no doubt that Sheneor Zalman's theories on God and the world have analogies in philosophic pantheistic systems and that his words often resemble closely the expressions of such philosophers. Yet there is a line separating him from them, for he believes God to be a separate infinite entity and endeavors to express this idea clearly by saying, "He is totally distinct both from the upper and lower worlds and can in no way be compared to the soul in the body of man."³⁰ The vital force in things is only a reflection of His essence, but not the essence itself.

The practical implications of this view are the same as those of the earlier teachers, namely, that the presence of God is everywhere and that we must penetrate to the inner essence of things.

From God we turn to man. "Man," wrote Sheneor Zalman, "has two souls, the animal or natural soul and the divine or holy one." The first has its seat in the left side of the heart and is derived from the material power or shell (*Klipah*) in the world, while the second is located in the brain and emanates from the *Sephiroth* or the inner divine power. The second soul is subdivided into two parts, reason, which includes several stages, namely, wisdom, understanding, and knowledge; and spirit or qualities (*Midot*) consisting of the love and fear of God. Wisdom is the potential power to conceive ideas,

³⁰ *Iggeret ha-Kodesh*, Pt. III.

understanding is the realization of that power, and knowledge is the effort to unite with the thing known. This process is not spoken, however, of philosophic reasoning but of religious contemplation, for the object of knowledge is God and His manifestations. The qualities of love and fear of God are results of this contemplation, for an understanding of God and of His manifest greatness in the world must inevitably lead man to fear and love Him with enthusiasm and deep emotion.

The activity of the divine soul is expressed in thought, speech, and action, all centering around religion and the Torah. By thought is meant the penetration into the depths of the Torah; by speech, its study; and by action, the performance of the precepts. The qualities of the soul are primarily expressed in action; that is, through the love of God a Jew is actuated to perform all affirmative ('Asé) precepts, and through fear of Him to observe all prohibitive ones (Lo-Ta'asé).

In ordinary life, a struggle goes on between the two souls of man, the natural one, which lures him to the pleasures of this world, and the divine. To make the mind rule the heart, to cause the higher soul to rule the lower is the goal of life. This can be attained mainly by study of the Torah. In Sheneor Zalman's teachings, the Torah occupies a place of prime importance. It is an expression of the will and wisdom of God. One who immerses himself in it is thereby immersed in the very spirit of God.³¹ This idea is the greatest deviation by this Hāssidic master from the teachings of his predecessors. He restored study and actual knowledge of the Law to their pristine position. He undoubtedly considered prayer of great importance, but he regarded it as less significant than study.

Contemplative understanding of religion took primacy in Sheneor Zalman's system over mere enthusiastic religious feeling. He emphasized *Hokmah*, *Binah*, and *Da'ath* as the real gifts of human life. He followed in the Hāssidic paths, but he changed the center of its values. As a result of his views, he insisted that his followers abstain from excessive enthusiasm in prayer as expressed by vehement bodily movements, and he also attempted to limit the spread of the cult of Zaddikism. He remonstrated with his followers not to come to him for help in material things, and he advised them to pray to God personally for the fulfillment of their requests. He and his

³¹ *Tanya, Sefer Benenoim*. Ch. V.

descendants even refused to bear the title *Zaddik* and chose instead that of Rabbi.

The "*Habad*" tendency represented a purer and nobler kind of Hassidism. It did not prevail but it remained an important current in the movement nevertheless. It centered primarily in the Northern provinces of Russia and in some parts of Lithuania.

The other tendency was initiated by a great-grandson of the *Besht*, Naḥman of Bratzlav (1772-1810). This Hassidic leader was a man of extreme religious enthusiasm and deep emotion but of little learning. His main ambition was to keep the feeling of religiosity in the hearts of his followers at white heat. He started his activity with a criticism of the other leaders of the Hassidic movement of the day. Some of them, he believed, were utilizing the office of *Zaddik* for personal gain, and others made Hassidism a mere matter of routine without imparting to it the warmth and zeal of piety.

He therefore chose, as he said, a new way. In reality, however, it contained little that was new or original, for he merely emphasized certain elements of Hassidism which were of a popular nature. To him, prayer was the primary and the only means of communion with God. He likewise raised the function of the *Zaddik* to the highest degree. The *Zaddik* is, according to Naḥman, the very foundation of life, the real mediator between God and the world, and it is through his prayer and mediacy that all of life is supported. The duty of the followers, or the Hassidim, is not only to obey him implicitly, but to endeavor to be as near to him as possible so as to have a share in his spirituality, which is the only source of their own elevation.

There were, of course, different grades of *Zaddikim*, and only those of the higher type possessed the real power. That he himself was of the highest type Naḥman had no doubt. Yet in spite of his consciousness of the power bestowed upon him, he did not practice to a great extent, like the other *Zaddikim* of his generation, the writing of amulets and incantations. He believed in the efficacy of his prayers, and in order to initiate his followers into the mysteries of devotional prayer, he composed special liturgical pieces for them in Judaeo-German, and he urged them to express their devotion to God in the language best understood by them.

Naḥman possessed a poetic soul and an eye for the beauty of nature. His teachings, therefore, are tinged with beautiful remarks and aphorisms. On the whole, though, the aphorisms rarely express a

completely developed idea, for he was not a thinker but a man of feeling. He liked to instruct his followers by parables and stories which he himself composed. These stories and parables, which were later collected by his disciples, contain an occasional flash of thought, but they lack both literary beauty and depth of content, though, according to his admirers, they are supposed to contain thoughts of a very high quality. In general, Naḥman's type of Ḥassidism represented a gross exaggeration of those features which appealed mostly to the common man whose piety, though sincere, was simple and primitive.

In spite of his great enthusiasm and spiritual ecstasy, Naḥman did not succeed in founding a widespread movement. Bratzlavism remained the share of a limited number of Ḥassidim, although their mere continuation as a group without a leader, for no *Ẓaddik* succeeded him, is sufficient evidence of his influence upon those who came in contact with him. The Bratzlav group are still moved by the spirit of their dead leader, whose grave they visit annually. They are distinguished by their simple but sincere religious enthusiasm.

9. THE OPPOSITION TO ḤASSIDISM

Ḥassidism, as we have seen, did not introduce any new principles into Judaism, nor did it initiate any sweeping reform into its customs and practices. Yet, its emphasis on the inner meaning of the precepts against the external performance, its attribution of special importance to prayers, its call for enthusiasm and ecstasy in the worship of God coupled with the quasi-pantheistic utterances of the leaders, and the institutions of the cult of the *Ẓaddik* were bound to introduce changes into Jewish life when translated into action.

It did not take long, therefore, before it became evident that a new sect had arisen in Jewry—not a sect in the fullest sense of the word, but one which began to be differentiated by its mode of worship, by its attitude towards established Jewish ideals, and by its many religious customs. The Ḥassidim began to change the accepted version of the prayer book in accordance with the readings and emendations of Luria. Their prayers were carried on in a loud and noisy manner, often interrupted and accompanied by gesticulations and bodily movements. All these mannerisms were only the result of the demand that prayer be offered with enthusiasm and with outward signs of inner emotion. Yet, they necessitated the establishment of separate synagogues. Moreover, certain leaders and their followers

carried the religious fervor and ecstasy advocated by the movement to absurdity. Abraham Kalisker, a disciple of the *Maggid* and his followers, practiced abominable and ludicrous bodily contortions during prayer. Some, in order to show their religious fervor, roamed the streets somer-saulting and chanting songs in honor of God. Such manifestations of religious enthusiasm were not unknown in other religions, but they were entirely foreign to Judaism.

Again, the catering to the common man and placing him on an equal level with the scholar called forth an antagonism to learning. The apotheosis of feeling and emotion indirectly minimized the value of the intellect and created an attitude unknown in Jewish life. Likewise, *Zaddikism*, which assumed more and more the form of a cult, contributed towards arousing opposition to scholarship. No more was the learned man the ideal in life; the enthusiast, the pious mediator, the saint ruled supreme; nor was there any more incentive for striving towards personal advancement, inasmuch as the *Zaddik*, the chosen one, was supposed to provide not only for the material needs of his followers but for their spiritual wants as well.

These deviations and differentiations on the part of the *Hassidim* aroused bitter opposition in the Jewish communities where *Hassidism* spread; but the feeble opposition shown by the rabbis in the larger Jewish communities in the Ukraine, Podolia, and Galicia in the early period of the movement was soon overcome by the rapid growth of *Hassidism* and by the flocking of the masses to its banner. The opposition assumed shape and form only when, twenty-odd years after the death of the *Besht*, the movement began to penetrate into Lithuania, the center of learning and Jewish intellectualism. There, both the lay leaders and the rabbis, at the head of which group was the famous Gaon of Wilna (see below), sensed the danger that might threaten Judaism from the uncontrolled development of a movement in which unbridled religious emotion held sway; and this group took steps to check the spread of *Hassidism*.

We shall not chronicle the details of the great strife between the *Hassidim* and their opponents, the *Mitnagdim*,⁸² which lasted for thirty years and rent a great part of Russian-Polish Jewry in twain. The account can be found in the histories dedicated to that purpose.

⁸² It is not known definitely when the epithet *Mitnagdim* originated, but most likely the term was used very early by the *Hassidim* to designate all those who did not belong to their sect, hence it is used as a name for all Jews who are not *Hassidim*. For further details on the subject, consult the excellent History of *Hassidism* in Hebrew by S. Dubnow, Vol. I, Sec. 19-25 and Vol. II, Sec. 36-40.

We shall only limit ourselves to a brief survey of its most important episodes.

The first attack on Ḥassidism took place at Wilna in the year 1772, when the leaders of the community discovered that a small congregation of Ḥassidim existed in their midst. It was reported that the leaders of this congregation spoke against Elijah Gaon, the recognized head of Lithuanian Jewry. This, together with the changes the congregation introduced in the ritual, aroused the ire of the members of the communal council, who ordered the dissolution of the congregation and declared a ban (Ḥerem) against the Ḥassidim and their followers. The war was taken up by all important Lithuanian communities who respected the word of the Gaon, and they likewise declared a ban against the sect. Word was also sent to the important Jewish community at Brody in Galicia, urging it to join the other communities in the ban. The Ḥassidim were dismayed at these vigorous attacks, but refrained from an open counter-attack, preferring to fight secretly against their opponents in various localities. Several of their leaders, especially those of the Northern provinces of Poland, such as Menaḥem Mendel of Vitebsk and Sheneor Zalman of Ladi, made attempts to meet Elijah Gaon and to refute the charges against Ḥassidism, but the zealous Gaon refused to see them. The same leaders also endeavored to correct the gross tendencies that were manifested in the sect, such as the ludicrous practices of the enthusiastic followers of Abraham Kalisker, mentioned above. This, together with the meek attitude of the Ḥassidim, caused a temporary lull in the strife.

However, it did not take long and the flame of war in Jewry broke out again. In the year 1780, the first classic book of Ḥassidism, the *Toldot Yaḳob Yoseph* by Jacob Joseph of Polonnoye, the disciple of the *Besht*, was published. This book contained, besides the expression of the views of the movement, a good deal of polemic matter. Ḥassidism, through its spokesman, declared its disregard for learning and scholarship, and it dared to speak disparagingly of the rabbis and the intellectual leaders. When the book reached Wilna, it created a strong commotion, arousing great indignation on the part of the leaders of the *Mitnagdim*. Elijah Gaon saw his suspicions of the movement confirmed in the utterances of the book, and he rose to combat it. A new ban endorsed by the Gaon was declared against the Ḥassidim at Wilna in the month of Ab of the year 5541 (1781), and its enforcement was urged by him in a personal

letter to the communities of Lithuania. The ban called for the exclusion of the members of the sect from Jewish communities, for ostracizing them from Jewry, and for persecuting them in many ways. This decree was ratified a month later at the fair of the town of Zelva by the representatives of the four largest communities of Lithuania, Brest-Litovsk, Grodno, Pinsk, and Slutsk. A new ban signed by them was sent to all cities of Lithuania and White Russia with injunctions to carry out its interdicts.

The second attack had its effect, and a war between the Ḥassidim and their opponents was waged in many cities. It did not, however, check entirely the spread of the movement in the Northern provinces, for the moderate and improved type of *Ḥabad*-Ḥassidism made considerable progress in that region. On the other hand, the leaders of the opposition did not carry on their persecution with their former zeal. After a few years the strife lessened, and from time to time, only sporadic outbursts occurred in certain cities, such as Shklow, a stronghold of the *Mitnagdim*, and in other places. There was still, however, much tenseness between the parties, which was likely to cause a fresh outburst of the strife at any moment. This outburst actually occurred in the year 1796.

A new war was kindled because one of the propagandists of the Ḥassidim in his travels throughout many communities had posed as the son of Elijah Gaon and declared that his "father" repented his conduct toward the movement. The aged Gaon reenforced the ban and sent a letter to the communities urging them to renew the persecutions. A year later, the Gaon died and the strife would most likely have quieted down were it not for the fact that the Ḥassidim themselves gave cause for its renewal. A group of sectarians at Wilna exhibited great joy in an unseemly manner at the death of the Gaon thus provoking deep resentment in the hearts of their opponents, and revenge was sworn by the leaders of the community at the funeral of the great scholar.

This time a more vigorous method than the issuing of a mere ban was used. The leaders, or rather a war committee chosen by them, stooped to low measures against their enemies. They informed to the government authorities—the provinces had in the meantime been annexed to Russia—against the Ḥassidim, charging them both with heresy and political sedition. Twice the leader of the *Ḥabad*, Sheneor Zalman, was brought as a prisoner to St. Petersburg, the first time in 1798, at the petition of the Wilna war committee, and the second

time, in 1800, at the instigation of Rabbi Abigdor ben Hayyim of Pinsk, a bitter opponent of the movement. He was ultimately freed and exonerated from all charges, and what is more, the movement was legalized by the government. This, of course, put a stop to all further persecution; gradually the animosity died down, and the threatened rift in Jewry never took place.

In passing judgment upon the opposition to Hassidism, though we cannot refrain from condemning its fanatical zeal and unfair methods, we must not overlook the fact that there was some justification for it. In spite of the fact that a number of letters and circulars against the movement emphasized the differences of the sect in liturgical matters and the slight variations in other matters, these were not the cause of the bitter animosity manifested against the Hassidim. The keen eyes of Elijah Gaon penetrated deeper into the movement and recognized it as a source of danger to the standard type of Judaism. In his writings against the sect, he seldom mentioned the liturgical or other variations, but he dwelt upon their quasi-pantheistic conception of God, especially upon the hazy expressions which were bound to mislead the ignorant, upon the minimization of the value of scholarship, the encouragement of excessive emotionalism, and the introduction of Zaddikism.

As it was pointed out above, it was in these features that the sources of danger really lay. Unbridled religious emotionalism and undue stress upon the inner meaning of things, which is after all an indefinable thing, were bound to breed laxity of religious observance and often even heresy, especially when coupled with light-mindedness towards learning. The Messianic movements of Sabbatai Zebi and Jacob Frank had given sufficient evidence of such tendencies. Even in Hassidism itself, there were signs of an incipient inclination in this direction. A manuscript of a commentary on the *Tur*, the code of Jacob ben Asher, written by a Galician Hassid in the year 1748 reveals the germs of an attitude of disregard for the law and even of morality.³³ This writer was certainly not alone in his sentiments, for there were many whose views he expressed.

Likewise, the cult of *Zaddikism*, which raised the leader above the law and exacted blind obedience and undue veneration, was bound to bring more harm than good. If Hassidism remained within bounds and brought some fruitful results to Judaism, who knows

³³ See S. Dubnow's article in *ha-Shiloah*, Vol. VII, pp. 312-320, also his *Toldot ha-Hassidut*, p. 229.

but that we should not be thankful for this boon to the spirit of opposition which directly or indirectly controlled the movement and checked it from overstepping the limits.

10. *THE SPIRIT AND CONTRIBUTION OF ḤASSIDISM*

From all that has been said about Ḥassidism, its views and tendencies, we are now able to form an estimate of its general spirit and its contribution to Jewish life and Judaism. On the whole, though, it did not introduce, as pointed out, new values into Jewish thought or religion. Yet it did introduce a new note in Jewish life, and made several important contributions towards the improvement and elevation of Jewish spirituality.

In emphasizing the development of religious emotion, it succeeded in bringing the masses nearer to Judaism, and probably saved the lower strata of Ukrainian Jewry from spiritual degeneration, for signs of the beginning of such a process among them were not wanting at the period of the rise of the movement. It stopped the widening rift between the masses of that region and the standard type of Judaism by placing religious salvation within their grasp and making it attainable by means at their disposal, such as prayer and simple faith. Ḥassidism thus nipped in the bud certain heresies that had begun to spread among Jews at the time.

Again, by preaching the close presence of God and emphasizing the necessity of joy in life, it afforded an inner compensation to the masses for the suffering they endured in daily life and it lightened the burden of exile. Even the institution of the leadership of the *Ẓaddik* had also its bright side. It fostered solidarity among the followers, and at times brought out the best that was in them. Further, in setting a high goal for the *Ẓaddik* as superman and mediator between God and the world, Ḥassidism succeeded at times in developing really great personalities who, by their influence on their followers, stimulated the spread of morals and higher conduct of life. The very legends and stories about the *Ẓaddikim*, in which these saints were depicted as models of spiritual and moral perfection, served as a means of education for the masses, and often aroused in them a desire for emulation of such conduct.

Salutary to a certain extent was the fostering by Ḥassidism of the spirit of enthusiasm and ecstasy. These are important qualities for a group which has to face a constant struggle in life, such as is the fate of the Jews. It enabled the Ḥassidim at times to accomplish

great deeds in spite of enormous obstacles. As a result of all these things, Hassidism succeeded in preserving in large sections of Jewry during the Modern Period an original and complete Jewish life in the face of changed conditions. It helped to fortify that life so that it could withstand the inroads of the modern spirit much longer than in places where the movement had not taken root. And though it was not entirely successful in its efforts, Hassidism nevertheless contributed to the lessening of the devastations which these inroads made in Jewry.

On the other hand, we must not overlook the grave defects of the movement. It fostered religious fanaticism which often degenerated into bigotry. It encouraged superstition and impeded for a time the spread of enlightenment among the Jews by assuming a hostile attitude to science, to learning, and to all attempts at adjusting Jewish life to modern conditions which was a necessity if Judaism was to survive. Zaddikism, in its darker aspect, also exerted a bad influence upon Jewish life by minimizing intellectualism and placing obstacles in the way of healthy and necessary progressive movements.

We thus see both the lights and shadows of Hassidism, and all that we can say, while refraining from absolute judgment upon its place in Jewish history, is that it was a great movement and that its effect upon Jewish life was deep and widespread. We can add that even in later times, when Hassidism as an organized movement began to decline and its direct influence upon Jewish life gradually began to wane, its effects were still notable in Jewry. Indirectly the qualities of enthusiasm and deep emotion, which it generated in the hearts of its followers and which ultimately became hereditary qualities among the Hassidim, found expression in creative productions in modern Jewish literature and in the promotion of the nationalistic movement. These qualities were turned to good use by the descendants of Hassidim in activities beneficial to the Jewish nation at large, though of an entirely different character than those the founders had contemplated.

B. ELIJAH GAON OF WILNA

11. *LIFE AND ACTIVITY*

The second of the great leaders, whose personality and activity were determining factors in shaping Jewish life at the beginning of the Modern Period was Elijah the son of Solomon of Wilna, sur-

named the Gaon (1720-1797). The story of the life of this remarkable man, whose influence on the Jews of Lithuania lasted for generations, is a very simple one. He was born in a little town near Wilna, where his father, a great scholar and a descendant of a leading Jewish family resided for a time before moving to the large city. His first teacher was his father, but the abilities of the young Elijah were so extraordinary that at the age of six he dispensed with the aid of a teacher and continued his studies in Rabbinics unaided. At the age of seven, he delivered in the great synagogue of Wilna a Talmudic discourse which attracted the attention of the leading scholars of the city as well as those of other cities who were present. One of them, Abraham Katzenelenbogen, Rabbi of Brest-Litovsk, asked his parents for permission to supervise his education, and he placed Elijah in charge of his father, Rabbi David Katzenelenbogen of Kaidan. In that town, the young prodigy spent several years and benefited greatly by his contact with the leading scholars of the day, among whom was also Rabbi Moses Margolis, the commentator of the Palestinian Talmud, who introduced him to its study, a subject which was not cultivated by the Talmudists of the day.

The great passion of Elijah's life was study and acquisition of knowledge. It was all-consuming and all-embracing, and all other interests in life were to him of secondary importance. His thirst for knowledge was unbounded. At the age of eight, when he had completely mastered the entire Halakic literature, he turned his attention to the Agada and to the Bible. A year later, he began to delve into the mysteries of the Kabbala, and at the age of ten he was attracted by science. He studied astronomy, mathematics, and anatomy. He even wanted to study medicine at the university, but was prevented by his father from carrying out his purpose for fear that he would forsake the study of the Torah.

His marriage was a mere incident in his life and did not interrupt his studies, for Elijah refused to submit to any yoke other than that of the Torah. He never accepted a Rabbinical position nor any other communal office. In his youth, Elijah, in accordance with the custom of the very pious of the day, "went into exile," that is, he spent a number of years wandering incognito through the Jewish communities of Poland and Germany. At the age of twenty-eight, he returned to Wilna where he settled permanently, and for half a century studied and taught the Torah. The community, recognizing the greatness of the man, granted him a small pension from a fund left by one of

his ancestors, Rabbi Moses Rivkes, for the support of indigent scholars. The small weekly sum was, of course, hardly enough for the support of his family, but Elijah was satisfied to live in poverty as long as he was independent and not forced to interrupt his studies. Piety and modesty were the other two features of the character of Elijah. His great soul was permeated both with the love and the fear of God, and his life was dedicated to His worship and to the practice of morality in the same complete manner as he was devoted to the study of the Torah. His piety was not of the type of the *Besht*, which expressed itself in emotional outbursts, but of an austere and intellectual character. Obedience to the law was its main characteristic. The law was above all and it had to be carried out in life. As all great men, Elijah must also have been conscious of his greatness, but if he was he did not show it. He kept aloof from all communal affairs and did not exercise his authority except in matters where he saw injustice committed or truth perverted. He was as modest in his conduct as any ordinary member of the community.

Yet, though he shrank from publicity and lived the life of a recluse, his name spread far and wide, and the entire Jewry of Lithuania revered him and acknowledged him as their leader and arbiter in all matters. The scholars of the day in all lands submitted to his authority, and by popular acclaim, the title of Gaon was bestowed upon him. He established no academy and conducted no formal courses, but he had his own synagogue and the best and most erudite scholars of the great Wilna community considered it a privilege to be admitted to his company. In his later life, after the age of forty, he began to teach, selecting a small circle of scholars for whom he delivered at certain times discourses on various subjects.

The life and character of the Gaon is reflected in the stories told about him by his disciples and followers. There is nothing of the miraculous or the legendary in them; to these scholars miracles were not proof of greatness, for only intellectual prowess and exemplary moral conduct could excite their wonder and admiration. These stories tell of his remarkable assiduity in study. Although at an early age he had mastered thoroughly the entire Jewish literature in all its ramifications, he did not cease to review it again and again. It is told that from his youth up to his very death he never slept more than two hours a night, and these were not continuous but were divided into half-hour periods. We are also told of his great generosity and benevolence. He himself had little to give, but he made others

give; only for such purposes did he use his authority, for the rich people of the community obeyed implicitly the commands of the Gaon. The noble quality of his character as manifested by the high value he placed upon the dignity of his fellow-men, is illustrated by the following story: The meager stipend the Gaon received from the community was usually sent by the leaders through the communal clerk. One of these clerks had for several years retained the Gaon's money for himself, and although Elijah was aware of the fact, he consistently refused, in spite of the complaints of his wife, to tell the leaders of his plight. When his wife once informed him that his children were hungry, he advised her to take them to a neighbor's house at meal-time so that they might be given some food there. Only when the clerk was on his death bed did he confess his guilt and the story became known.

The Gaon's influence on his generation and on the one following was expressed in several ways, namely by the force of his own personality, by the new method he initiated for the study of the Talmud, and by his attitude toward secular studies. The mere existence of such a personality in the midst of a Jewry which was intellectually-minded was a factor in raising their spiritual and intellectual strivings.

The Gaon was the apotheosis of the ideal of the Jews of Lithuania. He typified to them all that was best in Jewish life. His all-embracing intellect, his passionate love for study, his high moral conduct, his saintliness, his fame in Jewry in spite of his modesty and aloofness, all these served as a source of inspiration to large numbers of Jews. The scholars who were privileged to come in contact with him were imbued with his love of learning, of truth, and of science. They spread his ideas to all corners of Lithuania, and they even attempted to perpetuate them in great institutions of learning.

But still greater was the Gaon's influence in the other ways referred to above. He was endowed with a mighty intellect not of the type which is inclined towards abstract reasoning, but of a legal and practical nature. He had a passion for facts, and with his keen mind he grasped that the vast structure of dialectics built around the Talmud by successive generations of scholars was not always founded on the actual text of the Talmud or the Mishnah. As a result, he disregarded the method of dialectic or pilpulistic interpretation of the Talmud prevalent in those days and substituted one of criticism. He devoted many years to the sifting of the texts of the great authoritative books of Halakic literature, such as the Babylonian and the Palestinian

Talmuds, the early Halakic Midrashim (Vol. I, Secs. 43, 44) of pre-Mishnaic times, and all other important treatises. He compared manuscripts and collated the passages repeated in several places, and with his vast mastery of the entire literature, he was able to elicit the proper readings and the correct text. Such corrections very often changed the interpretations of many passages and frequently undermined the foundations of a casuistic legal structure based on an erroneous text.

In his critical endeavors the Gaon had only one object, the search for truth, and he did not heed authority and tradition if these, in his opinion, opposed the true meaning. He, therefore, opened a new path in the explanation of the Talmud, which consisted in a critical examination of the sources of its text and its interpretation in accordance with the context. This method caused him often to deviate in his explanations from the standard commentators, such as Rashi and others, and even to interpret the Mishnah at times in a way different than the Gemarah.

Not less original than his critical method of study was his view of Jewish literature as a whole and of its relation to the sciences and secular studies. To him, Torah was all-inclusive. The Bible, Mishnah, and Gemarah are all parts of one whole. All things must go back to the Bible. He, therefore, endeavored to trace all laws in the codes to their sources in the Talmud, and the decisions of the Talmud to their source in the Pentateuch. This, of course, necessitated an intensive study of the Bible, and the Gaon was the only scholar of the day who paid so much attention to the Bible. In his passion for facts, he searched first for the actual meaning of the Biblical text in accordance with the rules of grammar and the science of language (*Peshat*), and then for the dialectic interpretation (*Derash*). He believed that both methods are justifiable, but above all the *Peshat* must be guarded. Again, since the Torah is all-inclusive and is the source of life for the Jew, nothing must remain hidden in it, and it is the duty of the scholars to understand every portion of it. Hence, he averred, we must study all sciences which in any way throw light upon any part of Jewish knowledge. His motto was, as testified by his disciple, "If a man is deficient in the sciences, he will be deficient a hundred-fold in the knowledge of the Torah, for both Torah and science go together."⁸⁴ He himself gave the best example of love for

⁸⁴ Baruch of Shklow, in the introduction to his Hebrew translation of Euclid's *Geometry*.

the sciences. Not only did he study them assiduously, but he wrote books on geometry, astronomy, and algebra, and with painstaking effort he drew a map of Palestine delineating the various boundaries of each tribe according to the book of Joshua.

The sketch of the life and activities of the Gaon would not be complete if we were not to take a glimpse into his ethical and theological views. It must be admitted though that the Gaon did not rise in his theology to a systematic conception of the essence and principles of Judaism, for systematization is a child of philosophy and abstract thinking and he kept aloof from such speculations. But in the stray remarks found occasionally in his commentaries on the Biblical books, we find flashes of noble moral thoughts and deep theological reflections. With all his love for the Torah and knowledge, he did not make it the sole aim in life, but placed the perfection of character on an equal footing with it, and even made the Torah a means for its attainment. Moreover, he believed that for the Torah to be effective the heart must be pure, for otherwise it may even prove injurious. "The Torah," says he, "is to the soul as rain to the soil. Rain, in descending upon the earth causes different kinds of plants, both nourishing and poisonous, to grow. Similarly, the Torah helps the good towards perfection, while it also increases impurity in the hearts of those who were originally wicked."⁸⁵ Perfection of life and morals cannot, of course, be attained simultaneously with pursuit after the pleasures of the world, and the Gaon, therefore, advocated the observance of a certain rigorousness and restraint of passion in life. He advised his family to follow such conduct in his epistle to them before his planned departure for Palestine—he was later prevented from making the journey—and he practiced abstemiousness in his own life to a still greater degree, for he regarded life in this world as a preparation for the other world.

The Gaon, however, did not value the other world for the reward the pious might receive there, but purely for the spiritual exaltation and joy it would bring. In fact, he thought the joy he experienced in study and worship of God in this world sufficient reward for his exertions, and he is said to have declared, "Elijah can serve God without any reward." Thus Elijah of Wilna lived and acted, and by his life and teachings he became a source of inspiration to a large part of Jewry.

⁸⁵ Commentaries on Proverbs, XXIV, 3.

12. THE DISCIPLES AND FOLLOWERS OF THE GAON

The Gaon did not create a movement which resulted in the formation of a distinct party in Jewry as the *Besht* did, but his influence lasted for several generations and brought about beneficial changes in Jewish life. He left many books but still more disciples and followers who carried his ideas into practice. Almost all great scholars of Lithuania considered themselves his disciples, but there was a smaller circle of men who were close to him and who really deserved that name. It was they who adopted his method of studying the Talmud, who introduced the study of the Bible and Hebrew grammar into Jewish circles where hitherto it had been neglected, and who cultivated the sciences and created a new scientific literature in Hebrew.

A disciple of the Gaon, Baruch of Shklow, translated Euclid's Geometry into Hebrew and busied himself with the study of the natural sciences, even to the extent of making chemical experiments in a laboratory provided for him by the patron of learning, Joshua Zeitlin, a follower of the Gaon. The brother of the Gaon, Issachar Baer, composed an excellent commentary on the Pentateuch and a short Aramaic dictionary. The son of the Gaon, Rabbi Abraham, collected and edited a number of the smaller Midrashim with a critical introduction which delineated a program for future critical studies of the Agada; he also wrote a geography in Hebrew.

Another disciple, Rabbi Menasseh of Ilia, followed his great master in developing the critical study of the Halakah as well as the method of Biblical research. Rabbi Menasseh, a man of broad vision and keen insight, attempted to initiate a movement to adjust Judaism to modern conditions, but he was stopped by his more conservative colleagues.

One of the favorite disciples of the Gaon, Rabbi Hayyim of Volozhin, founded the famous academy in that city, where study was conducted to a great extent in the spirit of the Gaon. This academy was one of the spiritual centers of the Jews of Russia for a century. There, many a great man in Israel who enriched Jewish literature in various branches and who contributed to the amelioration of Jewish life in numerous ways was nurtured in love of the Torah and of the Jewish people. There, they received their inspiration for what was best in Judaism, which they cherished even when they parted with the traditions of the academy.

The influence of the Gaon thus broadened the horizon of the

Jews of Lithuania who were hitherto confined to the "four ells of the Halakah." And while no movement was created, for the spirit of the ghetto was still strong and resisted all change, yet a link between the Jew and the outside world, in which he was soon to enter and struggle for his spiritual existence, was created. An impetus was given for a change in Jewish life, for the later movement of the Russian enlightenment, or Haskalah. It was due to that impetus and its salutary effect that the movement aiming at a change in Jewish life, which came later and which precipitated a struggle between the young and the old in Jewry, was moderate in its demands and on the whole beneficial to Judaism.

C. THE HASKALAH MOVEMENT IN GERMANY

13. *THE CAUSES OF THE MOVEMENT*

German Jewry, which was largely instrumental in effecting the transition in Jewish life from the Mediaeval to the modern state, presented at the beginning of the period under discussion an entirely different aspect than her sister Jewries of Eastern Europe. That Jewry was, in the middle of the eighteenth century, in a state of spiritual exhaustion. It lacked, first of all, the strength and solidity derived from the compactness of masses. The number of Jews in Germany was much less than that of Poland, and, in addition, they were scattered in small communities throughout the land. Furthermore, the Germany of that day was broken up into three hundred diminutive kingdoms and dukedoms, each of which had its own laws and regulations concerning the Jews; consequently no general organized Jewish life could be carried on. Each community attended to its affairs in the way it saw fit, and only on special occasions was a concurrent action effected.

It lacked, likewise, the moral fortitude arising from learning and intellectual activity. The age-long persecutions to which the Jews of Germany were subjected gradually wore away their spiritual strength. The glory of learning had departed from this ancient Jewish center long ago. The number of academies had diminished and correspondingly the number of students and scholars. The rabbis of the large communities were mostly imported from the East-European centers and even the teachers for the young were largely immigrants. Jewish Germany thus became spiritually dependent upon the neighboring countries.

Nor was the economic and political situation of the Jews in any better state. In spite of the fact that the echoes of the liberal thought of French and English free spirits were loudly reverberating in Germany, the position of the Jews there remained unaltered. The walls of the Ghetto were still standing and no Jew could escape them. The number of discriminations against the Jews was exceedingly large and rigorously enforced. They were limited in their movements from place to place, restricted in their occupations, and burdened with taxes. Only a few privileged Jews, called *Schutz-Juden*, had the right of domicile in all cities of Prussia, and even this right was transferable only to the oldest son. All the others were called "Tolerated," and their right of domicile was limited to their place of residence, and it could not be transferred to any of their children. Similar laws prevailed in other states. Even their natural increase was controlled by law, for Jews in most of the states of Germany were not allowed to marry except by special permission.

They were also hemmed in by a host of regulations tending to restrict their economic activity. Jews were not allowed to buy real estate, or to engage in agriculture, or in many other industrial and commercial activities; and on the whole, they were limited to money-lending and the various forms of petty trade. To make the burden heavier, the government of Germany levied upon them all kinds of taxes and excises, some of the most humiliating kind. The Jew had to pay for everything, even for the air he breathed. The famous saying of Mendelssohn on his visit to Dresden in the year 1776, upon being forced to pay the poll-tax, "The laws of Saxony place in the same category the educated Jews of Berlin and the Polish oxen," sums up the situation.

These discriminations generated in the hearts and minds of many Jews a feeling of impatience with the ghetto, its life, and all that was connected with it. It expressed itself in a desire to change that life in all its aspects, political, economic, and spiritual. This desire was crystallized into a movement to escape the ghetto and to adjust Judaism to new conditions by several factors which affected Jewish life at the time. The first was the rise of an affluent class within German Jewry. In spite of all the economic restrictions to which the Jews were subjected, a number of them succeeded in overcoming the difficulties and amassing wealth through various transactions. The Seven Years War, which raised Prussia to the rank of a great European power, also raised some Jews to a high economic position.

These were the contractors, money-lenders, and court agents. Frederick the Great, who, on the whole, was unfavorably disposed towards the Jews, made an exception of some individuals of the race whose commercial talents he recognized and gave them an opportunity to display them in various ways. Thus there arose in Berlin a number of houses, the heads of which, though Jews, exerted great influence upon the commerce and industry of Germany. The Veitels, the Itzigs, the Halfons, and others became important names in the world of business.

With wealth and contact with the world outside the ghetto, there also came an increase in the spread of secular education among the younger members of this class. The sons and daughters of the wealthy Jews, especially the latter, were trained in universities and gymnasia, not in the Jewish academies nor in the elementary schools of the ghetto. This education, together with their neglect of the study of the history and lore of their people, caused them to fail to appreciate the value of Judaism, and due to their anomalous political position, it even bred in them a spirit of contempt for their own traditions. Economically and educationally, the young Jews and Jewesses were not only equal to the gallant scions of German families but were their superiors. Yet due to the state laws, they were subjected to all the humiliations and indignities which the name Jew or Jewess entailed.

The second factor which fanned the feeling of impatience with the old type of Jewish life into a strong passion for escape, was the spirit of liberalism and free thought which stalked abroad. The speculative thought of the eighteenth century was distinguished both by its teaching of the brotherhood of man and by its opposition to all established forms of dogmatic religion. These tendencies were sponsored in various ways and different languages by a long line of illustrious leaders in science, philosophy, and literature. The English philosopher, Locke (d. 1704), had already championed the political and intellectual liberty of the individual. He advocated religious toleration, claiming that the individual is the sole judge of his beliefs. His cry was taken up by a host of followers in the eighteenth century, who, not satisfied merely with freeing the individual from the clutches of the Church, also waged battle against the Church and its institutions. This battle broke out in full blast with Voltaire and the French encyclopaedists. Voltaire opposed all dogma and authority in the name of science. He admitted the value of pure rational religion

but considered dogma and authority dangerous. The encyclopaedists, Condillac (1715-1780), Diderot (1713-1784), Jean d'Alembert (1717-1783), and Baron von Holbach (1723-1789) championed a materialistic view of the world, rejecting the belief in the immortality of the soul, in the existence of the other world, and in reward and punishment. In the field of social life, Montesquieu (1689-1755) fought vigorously against the power of absolutism in the state and church. Rousseau went further and taught the equality of all men, and demanded the institution of pure democracy.

All these ideas were taken up by German thinkers in a more or less modified way, and as a result, there arose the philosophy of enlightenment (*Aufklärungsphilosophie*) fostered by a philosophical king, Frederick the Great. This philosophy aimed to raise the people from its state of Mediaevalism and to introduce them to the prevailing liberal thought. It purported to purify religion and to enthrone reason in place of authority. It dealt primarily with religious questions and with problems of ethics and taste. It was saturated with materialism and rationalism, and its ethics was based on the conception of happiness, though this happiness meant the well-being of the masses. In general, the prevailing philosophy in Germany tended to reduce religion to cold morality and to free the individual from the bonds of authority. These views were shared by the upper circles of society, for to profess them was considered a mark of distinction and education.

That many of the younger Jews and Jewesses were inoculated with the new ideas goes without saying. The loud cries for freedom, equality, and the rule of reason which resounded in the general literature and were even heard in the enlightened circles of society, also penetrated the thick walls of the ghetto and were caught up by many eager ears. Longingly, the younger members of Jewry looked upon the outside world, which dangled before them such alluring ideals as freedom and humanity, and a passion was born in their hearts to leave the ghetto, to be like all men. But reality quickly brought disappointment. Prejudice was still rooted deep in the hearts of the Germans and the laws were inexorable, so that perforce the Jews had to remain within the ghetto. Bitterness arose in their hearts against their intolerable fate and often also against the type of Jewish life they were trained in, against all the racial traditions, which they considered the cause of their suffering. Some sought escape from their fate by extreme means, by conversion, and were

lost to their people; others bore the burden with malice in their hearts. A rift was thus created between many of the younger Jews and Judaism.

The rift was greater among the upper circles of Jewish society. They who enjoyed privileges and who often mingled with the liberal and free spirits among the Christians, were lured still more by the glamour of the world and were slowly engulfed by it. It was the families of the wealthy Jews that furnished so many converts during the last quarter of the eighteenth century, and the leaders in the process of final separation from Judaism were the brilliant and beautiful daughters of Israel.

As a remedy against the disintegration and moral dissolution of Jewry, there arose the movement of Haskalah or enlightenment. It was not initiated by anyone in particular, nor can any specific group claim to be its originator. It was felt by many that a change had to come in Jewish life, that the ancient forms were no longer suitable, that Judaism had to adapt itself to new conditions. These people, however, had no definite philosophy of Judaism, and the changes they advocated were concerned with external forms of life rather than internal.

At the basis of the movement there lay the desire to escape the burden of the ghetto and the bonds of the inexorable laws hemming in the Jews. The sponsors of the enlightenment believed that the separateness of the Jews from the rest of the world, the Judaeo-German dialect they spoke, and the one-sided religious education they gave their children created a barrier to the improvement of their political and economic state. And though in the second half of the eighteenth century, the hope for emancipation was a mere dream, the enlightened believed that it would ultimately come if the Jews would prepare for it.

They thus set about to change Jewish life. The means chosen for the realization of their aim were borrowed from their neighbors, namely education and enlightenment. They strove to improve Jewish education first, by introducing, in addition to the teachings of sacred learning, instruction in secular subjects, especially history, geography, and the sciences; and second, by minimizing the study of the Talmud and increasing instead that of the Bible and the Hebrew language. They also wanted to develop a taste for literature among the Jews and to enlarge the scope of their view of the world. In short, the

enlightened aimed to create a Jewish renaissance which would bring the Jews closer to the modern world.

It is not definitely established whether the leaders of the Haskalah looked upon the revival of Hebrew and the creation of a literature in that language merely as means of bringing about a change in Jewish life or whether they really considered them as aims in themselves. There were two types of the enlightened (Maskilim): those that came from Poland, Galicia, and other East-European countries, where Jewish life was complete and the power of tradition strong, and those who were natives of Germany. The former undoubtedly cultivated the renaissance for its own sake, while the latter strove, as their later actions showed, towards a more complete change in Judaism; the renaissance of Hebrew was to them a means rather than an end. Be that as it may, it was a necessary means, for the majority of the Jews still understood Hebrew better than German. Thus, while the enlightened set on their way to change Jewish life, in order ultimately to attain emancipation by means of a revival of Hebrew, they indirectly gave an impetus to the creation of modern Hebrew literature. Even their attempt to change the spoken language of the Jews from the Yiddish dialect to pure German by teaching the Bible with the aid of a German translation helped to increase the knowledge of Hebrew as well.

The Haskalah movement was initiated by many people, but like every other movement, it needed a central figure, a great personality to breathe into it the spirit of life, to give it form and content. That man was soon found, and his name was henceforth connected with the rise of the Haskalah.

14. MOSES MENDELSSOHN

Moses Mendelssohn, the last of the triad of great personalities who arose in Jewish life at the beginning of the Modern Period, was born at Dessau, Germany, in the year 1729. His father Mendel (hence the name Mendelssohn), a descendant of Moses Isserlis, the famous codifier (Vol. II, Sec. 60), was a struggling scroll-writer who possessed a fair amount of Talmudic erudition. He was Moses' first instructor and quite diligent in his task, for he inspired in his pupil a passionate love for study. As a result of his great assiduity in learning, the youngster fell sick and became a hunchback for the rest of his life. This bodily defect, however, was compensated by

the acquisition of a vast amount of knowledge. At the age of ten, young Moses was already known as a brilliant Talmudist, and the famous scholar, Rabbi David Fränkel, the spiritual leader of the community, undertook to guide him in his further studies. Fränkel not only taught Moses the Talmud and the Codes, but he introduced him to the study of Jewish philosophy, which the eager student devoured with avidity. He also acquired a fair knowledge of the Bible, and the Hebrew language and grammar. His education was thus profound and well-rounded.

At the age of fourteen, in 1743, this brilliant youth left his native city for Berlin to seek his fortune. At first, he registered in the private Talmudic academy of his former teacher, David Fränkel, now Rabbi at Berlin; but the knowledge-thirsty youth was not satisfied with the mere study of the Talmud, and he strove to master secular sciences as well. He soon found his opportunity through the help of some enlightened people with whom he came in contact. The Polish Jewish mathematician, Israel Zamosc, the physician, Abraham Kish, and the student Aaron Gumpertz instructed him in mathematics, Latin, French, and English. Young Mendelssohn made great strides in his studies; his teachers were proud of him, and Gumpertz introduced him to many learned men of his circle. Upon leaving the academy, Moses was forced not only to earn his livelihood, but also to endeavor to attain the privilege of domicile in the city, for unattached Jews had no such right. He obtained a position as tutor to the children of the rich silk manufacturer, Isaac Bernhard, and thus he succeeded in solving both his problems. A year later, he became the book-keeper of the firm, and still later a partner in the business.

From that time on, Mendelssohn devoted himself to the service of two masters, giving the day to commerce and the evenings and leisure hours to study. He continued to woo his beloved mistress, knowledge, as assiduously as before. Gumpertz introduced him to Lessing, and a friendship which lasted for life was henceforth established between the two men.

Lessing contributed much to the spiritual and intellectual development of his younger friend, for he helped him to acquire a brilliant German style. Mendelssohn's first attempt in that language was a defense of Lessing's drama, *Die Juden*, against the attack of the Orientalist, Michaelis. This was followed by a philosophical treatise,

Philosophische Gespräche (Philosophic Discourses) which Lessing published without the consent of his friend, and by a joint work of Lessing and Mendelssohn on the English poet, Pope. These works impressed the literary world greatly both by their content and by their style. In a manner, the brilliancy of style made the greater impression, for it was considered exceptional that a Jew should master the German language so completely. Even the king, Frederick II, made inquiries concerning this young Jew who wrote such beautiful German.

From that time on, the star of the young philosopher and writer began to rise and his fame to spread. When, in the year 1756, the scholarly publisher, Nicolai, established his *Bibliothek für schönen Wissenschaften und freie Künste*, a periodical intended as a medium of expression for the best minds and spirits of Germany, Mendelssohn was invited to become a contributor. In this publication, he printed a number of long essays dealing with aesthetic subjects, which were later published as separate books. These, together with his critical essays in Nicolai's later periodical publication, *Die Literaturbriefe*, made Mendelssohn one of the arbiters of fine taste in Germany. In 1761, he became engaged to Fromet Guggenheim of Hamburg, and two years later married her. Fromet was a woman of excellent character, and it was partly due to her effort that the Mendelssohn home became a meeting-place for men of intellect, both Jews and non-Jews.

In 1763 our philosopher won the prize of the Prussian Academy for a treatise on the subject of the *Evidenz der metaphysischen Wissenschaften*, in which he proposed the theory that the principles of metaphysics can be established by proof as clearly as those of the sciences. This distinction heightened his fame, especially because he was victorious over the celebrated philosopher, Immanuel Kant, who won second prize. It must be admitted, though, that it was not in depth of thought that he surpassed the great German sage, but in the clearness and order in which he arranged his arguments. The same year he was granted by Frederick the Great the patent of a *Schutz Jude*, a privileged Jew. This favor, though, was bestowed upon him not by the good will of the philosophic king, but as a result of considerable efforts by Mendelssohn's admirer, the Marquis D'Argens, a friend of the king. Mendelssohn himself at first refused to submit a petition for the honor, claiming that it would be unfair for him

to be an exception while his brethren were deprived of their rights. He yielded only after considerable insistence on the part of the Marquis and other friends.

Mendelssohn reached the pinnacle of fame and popularity with the publication of his book *Phaedon*, a treatise on the immortality of the soul. The book, an imitation of the Platonic dialogue of the same name, was written in a splendid style and with such sincere conviction that it was hailed by religious and ethical thinkers as the opening of a new epoch in the solution of that important question. He was named the German Socrates, and his popularity spread beyond the borders of Germany. Many celebrated tourists who visited Germany thought it their duty to visit this most remarkable Jew. Princes sought his acquaintance, and the Duke and Duchess of Schaumburg-Lippe came to visit him in Pyrmont, a health resort, where he lived for some time. The Crown Prince of Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel was his intimate friend and corresponded with him on religious questions. Likewise, many famous Gentile scholars and men of letters, among them the German poet and philosopher Herder, sought his advice and guidance. It is even told that several French noblemen on their visit to Germany said that their sole purpose in coming to the country was to see the king and Mendelssohn. He, however, in his modesty, directed them to Weimar to see Goethe.

With the exception of the incident of his conflict with Pastor Lavater, which will be discussed below, and several attacks by anti-Semites for his Jewish activities, Mendelssohn's fame and reputation remained unimpaired during the last two decades of his life. A few years before his death, he issued an important philosophical work entitled *Morgenstunden*, containing lectures on the philosophy of religion delivered at his home before a limited circle of friends. His last work, "An die Freunde Lessings," was an essay against Spinoza, which was intended to save the reputation of Lessing whom the philosopher Jacobi had accused of having become a follower of Spinoza a few years before his death. Shortly afterwards, in the year 1786, Mendelssohn died. He was mourned by the intellectuals and literati of Germany without exception. The leading periodical of Prussia, "*Die Berliner Monatsschrift*," in its warm eulogy declared him to have been the pride and ornament of the country, and this at a time when the gates of the ghetto were still securely locked. This, in brief, was the career of the son of a poor scroll-writer of Dessau.

We have thus far surveyed briefly the life of Mendelssohn, the man, and we shall now turn to his life as a Jew, as one of the leaders of his people who helped to shape the destiny of a great Jewry. But before doing this, let us first form an estimate of the character of the man, which will give us the key to his numerous activities.

The greatness of Mendelssohn consisted not so much in his contributions to philosophic knowledge as in his own character and personality. As a philosopher, he was primarily an eclectic and a classifier of systems developed by his predecessors, and he was completely overshadowed by the thinkers who followed him, such as Kant, Fichte, and Hegel. As a great Jewish personality, though, his services were outstanding and distinguished. Biographers often comment upon his qualities of modesty, goodness, and friendliness to all, irrespective of station in society. The fact is that it was not in one of these qualities that he stood out, but in the successful combination of many traits and characteristics which made for a complete and perfect personality. His was a harmonious soul which enchanted even his antagonists by its beauty.

Mendelssohn, though a rationalist, considered the aim of life not speculation but the doing of good; the former was to him but a lower degree of wisdom which was to lead to goodness. He considered the ideal religion the one which was the most tolerant and which encompassed in love the entire human race. These two ideals he realized in his own actions, and his whole life was a reflection of their operation. People of all beliefs and opinions, of all stations in life, rich and poor, of high and low rank, Jews and non-Jews, all found in him a counselor, friend, and guide. When he rose to eminence and became the leader of the movement of enlightenment, there flocked to his house a miscellaneous group of young Polish Jews to whom Berlin and its sage were a veritable Mecca, and burdened him with their requests for assistance both in financial and educational matters. Some of these were ill-mannered, shabbily dressed, and did not harmonize with his refined home and taste, yet he received them with kindness and granted their requests in the best manner possible.

The philosopher Solomon Maimon (below Sec. 15), that man of brilliant intellect but of eccentric character, whose criticism spared no one, speaks enthusiastically of Mendelssohn's adaptation to the psychology of the Polish Jews who burdened him with their troubles and of his sympathetic endeavors to help them. He declares him a

master in the art of finding the good qualities in every man's character. His forbearance of wrong done to him was remarkable. Once when walking with Professor Engel in a Berlin park, a ragged drunkard began to mock the queer-looking Jew, calling him degrading names and even attempting to pull his ears. The professor raised his cane intending to belabor the wretch, but Mendelssohn stopped him saying, "Let the poor scoundrel have at least this joy in life, to insult a Jew without incurring any harm to himself."

The outstanding feature of the character of our sage was the symmetry of its various qualities. In it were blended cold reason, deep emotion, and simple faith in fine harmony. Each of these opposite traits had its place in his soul and fulfilled a necessary function. In his correspondence with his fiancée, Fromet Guggenheim, which extended for a period of two years, there is expressed the love of a noble soul, never passionate, yet saturated with a deep and intense emotion. Critical as he was of all dogmatic religious principles, he was a loyal Jew in the fullest sense of the word. He carried his religion with dignity and performed its observances punctiliously even in the company of princes. He was the ideal modern Jew who united in himself in an harmonious synthesis the best there is in Judaism with the equally best of European culture. Mendelssohn felt with all the intensity of his great soul the humiliating position of the Jew, and he strove with sincere zeal to ameliorate the situation. Yet he believed that this had to be accomplished not by begging and pleading with the mighty but by distinguished acts on the part of the Jews. In his letter to Herz Homberg, he wrote, "There must arise among us more and more men who without noise should come to the front and perform valuable services to humanity. Recognition to our people will then follow."⁸⁶

He carried out this maxim in his own life. Probably the greatest service he performed for his people was the respect he earned for it by his conduct. The mere existence of a man of the type of Mendelssohn, one whose life Kant thought an example of nobility of soul, one whom Herder admired and felt honored to be his friend, one who carried his Jewishness openly and with dignity, constituted the first step towards the emancipation of the Jews in Germany.

Yet Mendelssohn himself was the least satisfied with this kind of service to his people, and he devoted a great part of his life to the amelioration of both their political and spiritual states. As a believer

⁸⁶ *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Berlin, 1930, Vol. V, p. 66.

in the power of enlightenment and culture, he saw the need of initiating such a movement among them. To him the only remedy for the ills of the Jews and Judaism was an increase of knowledge and a proper adjustment of Jewish life to the changed conditions. To this cause he dedicated his energies.

His earliest attempt in this direction was the issuing, in conjunction with his friend Tobias Bock, a weekly pamphlet by the name of *Kohelet-Musar* (A Miscellany of Ethical Essays). He was inspired in this literary venture by the publications of "The Tattler" and "The Rambler" by the English essayists, Addison and Johnson. It was, of course, a very poor imitation of these brilliant essays, but the purpose was a noble one. In the few issues of the periodical, he attempted to teach the people not only morality but also to develop their appreciation of the beauty of nature and to inculcate in them a conception of pure religious principles. He also advocated the necessity of cultivating a literary Hebrew style and of stimulating a renaissance of that language.

Later, he turned his attention to another phase of literary activity. Desiring to acquaint the world with the literary contributions of the Jews through the ages, he translated into German a selection of the writings of Yedayah ha-Penini (Vol. II, Sec. 29) and some poems of Judah ha-Levi. He also issued again Maimonides' treatise on logic with a commentary of his own and a Hebrew abstract of his *Phaedon* with the intention of arousing a desire among the Jews for philosophic speculation.

However, these early literary efforts on his part were insignificant as compared with the greater deeds he accomplished on behalf of his people in his mature years. The first of these was the incident with Lavater. Johann Kaspar Lavater, a Swiss pastor with pretensions to philosophy, visited Mendelssohn several times and conversed with him on religious matters. In one of the conversations, the latter said that he respected the moral character of Jesus but regretted exceedingly that he played a greater role in Christianity than a mere moral teacher. Lavater, who was a zealous and deeply emotional Christian, on hearing this expression of opinion from Mendelssohn, misinterpreted it, and in his distorted mind conceived the idea of persuading the Jewish philosopher into becoming a Christian. He challenged him publicly either to refute the arguments of a certain book by a French theologian, Charles Bonnet, proving the verity of Christianity, or, if failing to do so, to embrace that religion.

To make the position more difficult, Lavater dedicated the translation of Bonnet's book to Mendelssohn, and in his public letter he spoke of him in the highest terms, calling him the German Socrates.

Mendelssohn was naturally reluctant to enter into religious disputes, but, since this was forced upon him, he defended his own name and that of his religion in a splendid manner. In a pamphlet against Lavater, he first administered a courteous but stinging rebuke to the pastor for making public the contents of a private conversation, and then he clarified his position in regard to Judaism. He said, "Were I in any way indifferent to my religion or even a mere deist, what would have prevented me from changing it in order to better my position? Fear for my co-religionists? Certainly not; their power is nil. Or is it merely a blind clinging to tradition? Have I not spent my whole life in analyzing traditional principles? I have never accepted anything merely on the basis of authority. If I observe my religion, it is because of my belief in its truth and purity. I hereby assert, in the name of the God of truth, that I will remain loyal to my religion as long as my soul will not change its nature." He then pointed out the tolerant nature of Judaism, that it admits to salvation even Gentiles who observe the seven Noahide precepts,³⁷ which to him were identical with the moral law of nations. "Judaism," said he, "unlike Christianity, never sent missionaries to convert people of a different religion. Were a Confucius or a Solon living in our time, I could admire and love him without even giving a thought to his religious beliefs."³⁸

His answer to Lavater made a great impression in intellectual and religious circles, and it precipitated a literary polemic. Many of the leading German thinkers and literati sided with Mendelssohn, but there were also many who attacked him for his frank utterances in defense of Judaism, though Lavater himself publicly apologized for his indiscretion. Especially vituperous in his accusation against the Jewish philosopher was a certain pamphleteer Kölbele. Mendelssohn was so grieved by these attacks that he fell sick, and for a time had

³⁷ The term Noahide or *Ben Noah* is applied in the Talmud first to any man, even if he belonged to the Hebrew nation, who lived before the revelation at Sinai; second, to Gentiles in general. The seven Noahide precepts are: 1) not to worship idols; 2) not to blaspheme God; 3) not to murder; 4) not to commit incest; 5) not to rob; 6) not to practice injustice; and 7) not to eat flesh torn from living animals. The first six were commanded by God according to the Talmud to Adam, and they were repeated by Him to Noah with the addition of the seventh. Hence their name. As we can see, they include the most important injunctions of conventional law and the principles of universal religion.

³⁸ *Gesammelte Schriften*, ed. Berlin, 1930. Vol. VII, pp. 5, 10, 11.

to abstain from all literary work. Yet it was this incident that awakened in him a desire to devote henceforth more energy to the welfare of his people. In a letter to Elkan Herz, one of his friends, who expressed his regret at Mendelssohn's having been forced into the dispute, he said, "Please God that I meet soon with another incident like this, and I will act again in a similar manner. When I think of the duty of every Jew to sanctify the name of God at any time, I cannot conceive how it is possible for some of our brethren to have been displeased by my part in this dispute."⁸⁹

From that time on, during the last sixteen years of his life (1771-1786), Mendelssohn hardly allowed a year to pass without accomplishing something on behalf of his brethren. Being the leading Jew of his time and the recognized head of his people, he was constantly burdened with various requests. He interfered for the oppressed Jews of Saxony, compiled at the urgency of Hirshel Lewin, the rabbi of Berlin, a manual of Jewish civil and family law in German, vindicated in the press the Jews from various accusations, and finally made the first important step in the long struggle for emancipation.

In 1779, the Jews of Alsace were bitterly attacked in a pamphlet written in French by a high official. They turned to Mendelssohn to vindicate them. He asked his friend, the military councilor, Christian Wilhelm von Dohm (1751-1820), a man of liberal opinion, to undertake the defense of the Jews. The latter then published in 1781 his book *Über die bürgerliche Verbesserung der Juden* (Concerning the Civil Amelioration of the Jews.) In this work, Dohm advocated granting civil rights to the Jews with slight restrictions. The work being written by a Christian noble and military councilor was epoch-making, for it was the first time that a strong demand had been made for the emancipation of the Jews. It also aroused the ire of all enemies of the race and a strong polemic against Dohm broke out in the press. Mendelssohn wanting to further promote the cause of the Jews induced his friend, Marcus Herz, to translate Menasseh ben Israel's apology *Vindiciae Judaearum* from the Latin into the German, to which he prefixed an introduction. In this introduction, Mendelssohn not only defended the views of Dohm and improved upon them, but he defined the prerogatives of religious representatives and limited their power to mere teaching denying them the right to punish the dissenters. He also condemned the issuing of a ban, a practice so frequently employed by the rabbis.

⁸⁹ Ibid. Vol. XVI. p. 148.

Such views irritated the clerical spirits, and attacks were launched against Mendelssohn on all sides. He was even accused by one opponent of disloyalty to Judaism, for he denied the right of religion to punish the offender, a fundamental view in that religion. He then wrote his "Jerusalem," in which he discussed in a clear and forceful manner the rights of the state and the Church, and expounded his views on Judaism. The book was enthusiastically received by all men of liberal minds, and Kant wrote, on the receipt of a copy of the work, a glowing tribute to its author. The efforts of Mendelssohn placed the Jewish question before the entire civilized world, and they bore fruit even during his lifetime. The famous Edict of Toleration issued in 1782 by Joseph II of Austria, which removed many of the Mediaeval disabilities of the Jews, was the result of Dohm's and Mendelssohn's writings.

Equally great and valuable were the services of Mendelssohn in raising the spiritual and cultural level of German Jewry, which services stimulated the Haskalah movement and turned it into a veritable instrument for the adjustment of Jewish life to modern conditions. The most important of these was his translation of the Pentateuch into German, to which was enjoined a Hebrew commentary, known as the *Biur*, written by Mendelssohn and others. He gave several partly contradictory reasons for this undertaking. In one of his letters,⁴⁰ he stated that originally he had translated the Pentateuch with the sole purpose that it might serve as a text book for his son in the study of the Bible, and only when Solomon Dubno, a Polish scholar who saw it in manuscript, begged him for permission to publish it did he reluctantly consent to the request. In another letter,⁴¹ he told Councilor von Hennigs that he had never meant to become a translator of the Bible nor the publisher of the translation, but intended to devote his days to the silk business and his nights to the study of philosophy, but because of the Lavater incident, he had lost the ability to pursue quiet contemplation, and had therefore turned to this work which he thought would benefit both his children and a great part of his nation. He believed that the translation and commentary was the first step toward the spread of modern culture among the Jews, a thing of which they stood in great need.

We can conclude that, though Mendelssohn might have originally begun this translation in order to help his children in the study of

⁴⁰ Letter to Abigdor Levi, *Gesammelte Schriften* Vol. XVI, p. 251.

⁴¹ B. Badt-Strauss, *Moses Mendelssohn, der Mensch und sein Werk*, p. 223.

the Bible, he soon saw a greater scope for it. He, like the other spirits of the movement of enlightenment, earnestly believed that the change by the Jews from the use of the Judaeo-German dialect to pure German would greatly facilitate the improvement of their civil status. He chose, therefore, the Bible translation as the best means for accomplishing that purpose, for the Scriptures formed an important subject of study. Besides, the commentary appended to the translation aimed to inculcate a better understanding of the Bible, and, by revealing the beauties of its poetry, to call forth a renaissance of Hebrew and an interest in that language on the part of the Jewish youth.⁴²

The prospectus and plan of the work was made public in a pamphlet called *Alim le-Terufah* (Leaves for Healing) in the year 1778, and the work was immediately begun. Mendelssohn himself supplied, besides his translations of the Pentateuch and of the Book of Ecclesiastes, an introduction in Hebrew and commentaries in that language on the first section of Genesis and on the entire Book of Exodus. Solomon Dubno, who at first joined him in the undertaking, completed the commentary on Genesis and supervised the publication of the work in general, supplying it with grammatical notes. Soon, however, differences arose between the two, and Dubno discontinued his labors. Mendelssohn then associated with him in the undertaking Naphtali Herz Wessely, Aaron Friedenthal, and Herz Homberg, who wrote the commentaries on Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, respectively. The poetic portions of Deuteronomy were commented on by Mendelssohn himself.

The appearance of the first book of the translation with the commentary aroused considerable opposition among the ultra-orthodox. They, like Mendelssohn, saw in this work the first step towards a change in Jewish life; and they feared that the translation would serve merely as an introduction to the study of the German language, which, in turn, would increase the pursuit of secular science among the Jewish youth, correspondingly diminishing their interest in the study of the Talmud. Though subsequent events justified their fears to a great extent, their opposition was baseless, for no matter how honest the motives of the opponents were, their efforts to stop the march of events and their endeavors to keep the Jewish youth within the bounds of the old ghetto were futile and ineffective. Were the

⁴² These purposes are stated by Wessely in his poem printed in the Prospectus of the work.

three distinguished rabbis, Ezekiel Landau (Vol. II, Sec. 49) of Prague, Raphael Cohen of Hamburg, and his son-in-law, Zebi Hirsh Yanow of Fürth, the leaders of the opposition, to see the situation in its true light, they would have cooperated with Mendelssohn and Wessely, who were loyal to Jewish tradition, in a gradual adjustment of Judaism to new conditions rather than opposed their work. The range of vision, however, of these worthy rabbis was narrow, and they exerted themselves to the utmost to stop the further publication of the new Pentateuch translation. They issued proclamations against it, and they were about to issue a formal ban against its study when Mendelssohn thwarted their efforts.

He turned to Councilor Hennigs of Denmark, who was his friend, and asked him to solicit the subscription of the King and the Crown Prince of that country to the new translation of the Pentateuch. The former succeeded in obtaining the desired subscriptions and thus put an end to the opposition, for Hamburg where Raphael Cohen lived belonged at the time to Denmark, and no action could be taken by the Rabbi against a book approved by the rulers of the country.

Mendelssohn was vexed at the opposition, for he knew that it was not justified, as the translation and the commentary were both written in a conservative spirit; and, as for the spread of the use of pure German instead of the Jargon dialect among the Jews, he considered it a necessity. Yet in his cold philosophic temper, he refrained from any polemics against his opponents. He merely complained against their condemning him without ground for such action, and he remarked ironically that were his work accepted without opposition he would have thought it superfluous. The strong antagonism to it showed that it was necessary.⁴³

The translation and the commentary did not entirely realize the hopes of Mendelssohn and his associates as expressed by Wessely in his poem appended to the prospectus, for conditions in Germany at the time directed matters into a different channel. But still it was a valuable work and helped greatly towards the renaissance of Hebrew literature, at first in Germany proper, and later in the East-European countries.

Mendelssohn's activities on behalf of the movement of enlightenment were, however, not limited to his writings, but expressed themselves to even a greater degree in personal contact. The oral Mendelssohn was at times more influential than Mendelssohn the writer.

⁴³ Badt, *op. cit.* p. 222.

His house, as stated above, was a center for all those who sought wisdom and knowledge. There, discussions were held frequently on the improvement of Jewish education, on the methods to be used in spreading culture among the Jews, on the necessity of reviving Hebrew letters, and on all questions affecting Jews and Judaism. At these meetings, plans were formulated how to carry out these good intentions into practice. All the efforts made in this direction by various men were directly or indirectly influenced by Mendelssohn's personality, for no undertaking was executed without his consent or help.

In order to complete our estimate of Mendelssohn we shall now turn to his conception of Judaism as expressed primarily in his "Jerusalem." He was, of course, a rationalist and his view on the subject was tinged with the thoughts current in his time. But as pointed out above, to him mere contemplation was not as high a purpose in life as noble moral conduct. The value of religion, therefore, according to him, does not consist in the purity of the dogmas it teaches, but in the ethics and morality it inculcates. It is understood, however, that the principles of a higher type of religion must not contradict reason, for otherwise they are not true. He found Judaism to be the ideal religion. Its dogmas, he claimed, are entirely consonant with reason and there is no contradiction between them. In fact, he said that Judaism has no dogmas and that the eternal religious verities, such as the existence and unity of God, His providence, and the immortality of the soul are not subject to revelation. These things are known to man by reason and are merely reaffirmed by Judaism. The revelation on Sinai concerned itself primarily with historical and moral truths, and its main purpose was to promulgate laws and precepts which are conducive to human happiness.

By the expression of these ideas, Mendelssohn aimed both to allow within Judaism latitude of thought and to emphasize the moral purpose of this religion. This moral purpose, according to him, can be realized only by maintaining the integrity of the Jewish people. He, therefore, put special emphasis on the covenant between God and the people of Israel. The latter was chosen because the ancestors of the nation showed exceptional religious faith, and this quality was transmitted to their descendants. As a result of this covenant, the people of Israel received the mission to teach the nations the high principles of morality, and the Torah was given to it as a means for the realization of that mission.

This mission, however, must not be construed that it is incumbent

upon the Jews to exert their efforts towards spreading their religion among other nations; on the contrary, Jews never strive to make proselytes. It is to be understood merely as a mandate to the people to distinguish themselves by their moral and religious life. The mere continuation of the Jews as a distinct entity, as a group which leads its peculiar way of life, is the special mode of fulfilling that mission. From this conception there follows the great importance that Mendelssohn laid upon the laws and precepts of Judaism. To him they were of the utmost value. Ethics and morality he thought are not attained by fine theories, but by practice. The ceremonies and precepts of Judaism inculcate in a practical way the desired ethical principles, and also form the means for preserving the integrity of the Jews as a distinct group. Hence he insisted again and again upon the importance of the observance of Jewish law and custom. He even proclaimed boldly that if the Jews could obtain emancipation only at the expense of the observance of their laws, they should rather forego the coveted emancipation than abrogate their laws.

This conception of Judaism and of the duty of the Jew towards it, though far from flawless, is quite a healthy one. And had times been more suitable for its development and realization in practice, it could, with some modifications, have become the basis for a real adjustment of Judaism in the modern world. Yet, regrettable as it may be, it did not exert the deserved influence on his contemporaries and even on his followers. Moreover, they even misinterpreted it and extracted from it only those ideas which were best suited to their distorted view of Judaism without paying attention to the conception as a whole.

It is still more regrettable that during the generations that followed, Mendelssohn's view was frequently misunderstood and he was made the subject of unjust criticism. At the rise of the nationalistic movement, the famous Hebrew writer, Perez Smolenskin, attacked Mendelssohn bitterly and accused him of being the father of the Reform movement in Judaism and the indirect propounder of the theory that the Jews are merely a religious group and not a nation. That both these accusations were unfounded is evident even from the brief survey we have given of his views. Mendelssohn persistently emphasized the authority of the law, while the Reform movement rejected it. Nor had he ever denied the nationalism of the Jews; on the contrary, his insistence upon the necessity of maintaining the integrity of Jewish

life belied it. Moreover, he always used the term "nation" whenever he referred to the Jews.

At the distance of one hundred and fifty years, we certainly have a better perspective and we can judge more calmly. It can be safely asserted that the fact that the Reform movement made its appearance a generation after Mendelssohn's death by no means indicates that his ideas were at the basis of its philosophy. To judge thus would only be to commit the well-known fallacy, *post hoc, ergo propter hoc*, i.e., that because two events follow one another, the first is the cause of the second. The Reform movement was bound to appear even if Mendelssohn had not lived. As a matter of fact, no one can tell to what end it might have led were it not for the restraining influence of the Berlin sage. The very mission idea, which the leaders of the movement borrowed from Mendelssohn, contained a hidden nationalism. It supplied an ideal for the movement and implied a desire to maintain the integrity of the people, though it was expressed by the champions of Reform in a religious form only. The mere fact that even the leaders of the Reform movement advocated a distinctness of life for the Jewish group shows that they unconsciously clung to the nationalistic principle, although they denied it officially. And all this must be traced back to the master. Likewise, the influence of Mendelssohn and his activities were directly responsible for the rise of the second enlightenment movement in East-European countries, which, notwithstanding its defects, was on the whole conducive to a better adjustment of Judaism to new conditions. It is impossible to trace here the various ways in which the personality, views, and activities of the Berlin thinker made themselves manifest through the Modern Period, but suffice it to say that at no time did their influence cease altogether.

15. DISCIPLES AND FOLLOWERS OF MENDELSSOHN

Many were the men of enlightenment in Germany who, during the life of Mendelssohn as well as after his death, called themselves his followers and continued his work of bringing about a renaissance of Jewish life. But very few really devoted themselves to the revival of Hebrew literature and to the improvement of Jewish education in the spirit of the master. A large number of those who spoke in the name of Haskalah and culture had only a superficial conception of both. Intoxicated by the spirit of free thought and lured by the hope

of emancipation, they were ready to sacrifice the best Jewish traditions and the greater part of Jewish religion for the sake of the new ideals. Their aim was not so much to reconcile Judaism with modern conditions as to make the life of their brethren less distinctly Jewish in order to bring them as close to their neighbors as possible. Some, in their zeal to accomplish this aim, expressed contempt for the traditions of their people and evinced openly or covertly a hatred towards the old forms of Jewish life and toward the large masses of Jews who still clung to them. Their work was, therefore, on the whole, more destructive than constructive, and the result was that the movement of enlightenment in Germany, which began with an effort to rehabilitate Jewish life, was ultimately turned into a movement of escaping from Judaism and all that it entailed.

The leaders among these pseudo-followers of Mendelssohn were Marcus Herz (1747-1803) and David Friedländer (1750-1834). The first was a physician by profession, but medicine was only his avocation, his real vocation being philosophy. He was a favorite pupil of Immanuel Kant and did much to popularize his philosophy in Berlin. By marrying Henriette de Lemos, a brilliant woman, he attained social prestige and great influence in the higher circles of Berlin society. She conducted a salon where the élite of both Gentile and Jewish society met to exchange views. It probably contributed much towards the fostering of good will between Jews and Christians, but it brought also much harm to the cause of Judaism. It was really a seminary for conversion, for the majority of its frequenters, especially the women, went so far in their good will towards their Christian friends that they followed them in embracing their religion. Herz himself, influenced both by his philosophy and his brilliant wife, displayed indifference and levity towards Judaism and contempt for its traditions and customs, and since he was a friend of Mendelssohn, a well-known thinker, and a man of high standing in social circles, his attitude was adopted by many.

David Friedländer, who hailed from Königsberg, was a descendant of a noble Jewish family of that city. He received a good Jewish education and possessed a fair mastery of Hebrew. After marrying the daughter of the Berlin banker, Daniel Itzig, he settled in that city and became a friend of Mendelssohn and an ardent champion of the cause of Haskalah. Being a man of wealth and with pretensions to Jewish and secular knowledge, he aspired, after the death of the

master to his place in German Jewry; he failed to attain the coveted position in spite of his participation in all Jewish activities on account of his superficial mind and weak character. At first he espoused whole-heartedly the cause of the Haskalah and established, together with his brother-in-law Isaac Daniel Itzig, the first modern Hebrew school in Berlin in which Jewish and secular studies were pursued, and supported and participated in the Hebrew periodical, *ha-Measef*. Gradually he deviated from that path and centered all his efforts on attaining emancipation at all costs. He aimed more at secularizing Jewish life than merely at enlightening it. The school, under his guidance, turned out good German but poor Hebrew scholars. The Jewish studies were reduced to a minimum while the secular were increased at their expense. Friedländer, after making several unsuccessful attempts to obtain complete or even partial rights for the Jews, became desperate and lost his appreciation of the value of Judaism and Jewish life. Misinterpreting Mendelssohn, he proclaimed ethics to be the essence of religion, disregarding the value of the precepts and customs. He went so far in his attempt to escape Judaism that he turned to the Protestant pastor, Teller, asking him on behalf of the group of "enlightened Jews" to allow them to embrace Christianity without being forced to believe in its founder or to attend Church services. The letter, in which he speaks of Judaism in a derogatory way and minimizes the value of its great literature, is a document of shame for Friedländer and the entire pseudo-Haskalah movement which he represented. Teller, however, refused to assent to a conditional conversion and the former leader of the enlightenment had to bear perforce the burden of Judaism.

Another of Mendelssohn's followers who possessed more knowledge than Friedländer but of a character far less earnest and whose activities were even more negative than those of the former, was Herz Homberg (1749-1841). He received a good Talmudic education and studied for a time under the famous Rabbi Ezekiel Landau at Prague. Having been influenced by the spirit of enlightenment, he later devoted himself to the study of the Bible, the Hebrew language and to the acquisition of secular knowledge. As all young illuminati of the day, he came to Berlin where he perfected his studies, and after a short sojourn in the city, went to Hamburg to attend for several years the pedagogical courses at the university. He then returned to Berlin and made the acquaintance of Mendelssohn, who befriended

him and engaged him as tutor for his son. He also collaborated with the former in his edition and translation of the Pentateuch contributing the commentary on the Book of Deuteronomy.

When the Edict of Toleration was published by Joseph II of Austria in 1782, Homberg went to that country in the hope of finding employment as a teacher in the Jewish schools which were about to be opened. Mendelssohn, though he suspected his friend's radical inclinations, gave him, out of respect to his knowledge, a warm letter of recommendation. After many tribulations, Homberg succeeded in obtaining the post of inspector-general of the new Jewish schools. At first, he was cautious, and desiring to obtain the good-will of the rabbis towards the schools he was about to found, addressed a Hebrew letter to the "shepherds of Israel" in which he outlined the program of instruction and urged them to support his scheme for an improved Jewish education. After the schools had been in operation for some years, however, their anti-traditional tendency became evident, for Homberg and his associates really cared little about improving Jewish education, but were primarily interested in Germanizing the Jews. A strong opposition arose on the part of the Jews to the new school system and to Homberg personally. He retaliated by attempting to force his scheme of education upon them with the help of the government. He submitted a memorandum to the emperor in which he slandered his brethren, and he proposed a series of improvements in the life of the Jews which aimed to destroy its distinctiveness. Among them were such propositions as the closing of all Talmudic academies and establishing only one modern academy in Prague, reducing the use of Hebrew to a minimum, and subjecting the printing of Hebrew books to severe censorship.

Such acts on the part of Homberg aroused strong opposition among the Jews, and ultimately he was forced to resign. For a time he devoted himself to writing both Hebrew and German text-books for religious instruction, of which the *Imré Shefer* (Fine Sayings) is the most important one. The book is well arranged and written in a clear and simple Hebrew style. It filled a need and went through several editions. This was partly due to the fact that the author refrained from expressing in this work his personal heterodox views, as it is written in entire harmony with the spirit of Jewish tradition. It even received the approbation of Mordecai Benet, the leading orthodox rabbi of the time.

Later, Homberg served as a censor of Hebrew books at Vienna.

Even in this capacity he evinced his strong antipathy to Jewish tradition, for he submitted to the government a memorandum proposing to prohibit the printing of Hebrew books which deal with the Kabbala, or with legal discussion, homiletics, and kindred subjects. In short, he aspired no more and no less than to stop all further productivity in the field of Rabbinic literature. Fortunately, his proposals were rejected by the government, and their only practical result was that the hatred of the Jewish masses toward their author increased greatly. Homberg thus typified in his various endeavors to force enlightenment upon the Jew the tragic end of the Haskalah movement in Germany, which was launched by its promoters with serious and noble intentions of beautifying and improving Jewish life, but ended in a tendency more inclined towards destroying that life than preserving it. Yet even this man performed some service on behalf of the development of modern Hebrew literature, for his text-books and his work in the field of Biblical exegesis are not without some merit.

One of the most interesting, though eccentric, characters of the group of friends and followers that surrounded Mendelssohn was the philosopher Solomon Maimon (1754-1800). He contributed little to the spread of the movement of enlightenment among the Jews, but the exceptional brilliancy of his mind and the very queerness of his personality exerted a considerable influence upon the events of the day. He was born in a village near the town of Mir, Poland, and was educated in the manner of his time by his father and then in the schools of the nearby towns. Endowed by nature with an extraordinarily penetrating mind, he mastered in a few years the intricacies of the Talmud and soon became famous as a prodigy (Ilui). His reputation made him a desirable party for a match, and his father was overwhelmed with offers by rich Jews who were anxious to secure the young scholar as a husband for their daughters. Finally, at the age of eleven, he was inveigled by a shrewd widow who kept an inn in the town of Nesvitz into marrying her equally young daughter. She undertook to support the couple for a period of years, and the future philosopher spent six years of misery in her house. His mother-in-law was of a domineering nature and took advantage of the youth of Maimon to maltreat him to a degree of even beating him. Yet these years did not pass without any advancement in his studies. As a child of six, Maimon gained some knowledge of astronomy from some Hebrew books he found in his father's library, and from then on his thirst for knowledge increased. He endeavored, therefore,

while in his mother-in-law's home to satisfy it. There, he learned by the queer method of scanning the Latin and German letters found at the bottom of the pages in the tractates of the Talmud to read these languages, and later, coming by accident upon a German book, he mastered its contents. He then exerted all efforts to obtain German books, and once he even walked thirty miles to borrow several of them. The books he succeeded in getting were of a miscellaneous nature; some treated of physics, some of philosophy, and others of medicine. Maimon swallowed their contents without discrimination. He also delved into the mysteries of the Kabbala and studied assiduously the works of the Mediaeval Jewish philosophers, especially those of Maimonides. His admiration for this philosopher was extremely profound, and he even assumed his name as a patronymic in honor of the sage.

After serving for several years as a teacher to the children of inn-keepers in various villages, he decided to leave his native land for Berlin with the intention of studying medicine and other sciences. He left his family without any means of support, and, not having money to travel directly to Berlin, he went by a circuitous road and finally landed at Königsberg. There he met several students and told them of his purpose, but his shabby dress and his peculiar jargonized German produced a bad impression upon them. He soon convinced them, though, of his knowledge by translating at sight several pages of a German philosophical book into Hebrew, and as a result they offered him assistance enabling him to proceed on his way to Berlin by way of Stettin. To Stettin he went by boat, but from there he made the rest of the journey on foot. Coming to Berlin, however, he was disappointed, for as all poor itinerants, he was lodged in the Jewish public hospital, the *Hekdesh*; and there it was discovered that he had come to study medicine, a thing which did not please the leaders of the community. He was refused the right of settlement and perforce had to leave. For some time, he associated with professional beggars and visited many Jewish communities in this manner. Ultimately he came to Posen, and there he made the acquaintance of Rabbi Hirsch Yanow, who befriended him and procured for him the position of tutor in the house of one of the community leaders. Maimon could never forget the kindness of the Rabbi, who later appeared in the role of opponent to the enlightenment movement. He speaks of Yanow in his autobiography in terms of the highest praise.

After two years in Posen, Maimon went to Berlin a second time, and this time he succeeded in making the acquaintance of many of the enlightened Jews, among them Mendelssohn, Friedländer, and Marcus Herz. They befriended him at first and sought to help him attain his end, the study of medicine. But the erratic seeker of knowledge, whose interest lay primarily in philosophy, not only lacked the elementary preparation for the study of medicine, but could not adapt himself to the discipline required in the study of a well-regulated science. He, therefore, pursued his studies in an unsystematic fashion. He perfected himself in philosophy, and with his penetrating mind he quickly mastered all systems. This study, however, had no practical value, and his friends persuaded him to turn to pharmacy; but only the theoretical side of the science attracted him, and as a result he never mastered it in a practical way. Thus, he again remained without any occupation, and owing to association with the wrong type of companions, he became lax in his conduct. All this caused his friends to persuade him to leave Berlin. Mendelssohn provided Maimon with letters of recommendation, and he went to Hamburg. There he made an earnest effort to acquire a systematic education, and although he was already thirty-odd years old, he entered the gymnasium at Altona; and after spending several years there, obtained the desired certificate. But his restless nature and the habit of inconstancy acquired during his wanderings made it impossible for him to apply himself to the pursuit of a profession, and he continued to lead an aimless life. He engaged in various tasks, translated scientific books into Hebrew, acted as tutor in private homes in various cities, until ultimately he had to seek aid from benevolent friends.

In the last years of his life, Maimon became a productive philosophic author. His first important work was *Die transcendente Philosophie*, in which he developed his own system of philosophy, with the intention of harmonizing the preceding systems and remedying their defects. Immanuel Kant, to whom the book was sent in manuscript by Marcus Herz for judgment and criticism, expressed himself in enthusiastic terms on its value. He testified that of all the critics of his philosophy, Maimon was the only one who understood it thoroughly. This work was followed by several others and many articles in leading scientific and literary journals. He also published at that time his autobiography, which impressed the literary world. His

name began to spread, and even the luminaries of the literary world, Goethe and Schiller, became interested in him.

All this did not improve Maimon's material situation. He still suffered the pangs of poverty. His lax conduct and bad habits acquired as the result of a life of misery estranged him from his Jewish friends and he was forsaken by them. He finally found a patron in the scholarly Count Kalkreuth, who provided for his wants and made him settle on his estate in Silesia. There Maimon died on the twenty-second of November in the year 1800. The leaders of the Jewish community at Glogau, whither Maimon was taken after death, not respecting the brilliant intellectual attainments of the erratic philosopher, conducted his burial in an undignified manner. Thus, did the keen Talmudic scholar and deep thinker end his tragic life, estranged from his brethren and soon forgotten by them.

Maimon exerted a great influence upon the course of German philosophy in his time. Both Fichte and Schelling borrowed much from his teachings, the former designating him one of the keenest minds of the generation. His contribution to Jewish learning, though, was little. His translations were not published, and the only work of value he produced in Hebrew was the commentary on the *Guide* of Maimonides, entitled *Gib'at ha-More* (The Height of the Guide), of which only the first part was published. The paucity of his contribution to Jewish knowledge, however, was not entirely Maimon's fault. He was more a victim of circumstances than of character. The peculiar conditions under which he lived, the suffering and misery he endured, thwarted his ambitions and forced him to lead an aimless life. When his powerful intellect finally broke its bonds and became productive, he was already estranged from his brethren and embittered against them. And thus, the Polish scholar enriched the world culture, but did little for the nation which had endowed him with his keen mind.

CHAPTER II

THE LITERATURE OF THE FIRST HASKALAH PERIOD (1781-1820)

A. FIRST EPOCH

16. GENERAL FEATURES

It is a phenomenon frequently met with in the intellectual development of all nations that children turn against their parents and condemn their actions severely, and quite often are more unjust in their judgment than strangers and objective observers. Thus it happened that the literary children, or, rather, the grandchildren of the early writers of the modern Hebrew literature, were the first to turn upon them and promulgate a severe attack on their endeavors. They misjudged their masters, viewed their motives through a distorted perspective, and in general minimized their achievements. Perez Smolenskin began the attack first in the late seventies of the last century by pulling down the founder of the Haskalah movement, Moses Mendelssohn, from the pedestal of honor and esteem which he held in the hearts of all the enlightened for a century. He was followed by many other writers who passed judgment on the entire first period of the Haskalah literature, and the opinion became prevalent that the generation of the early Maskilim,—usually called the *Measfim* (The Gatherers), because they concentrated their work around the monthly journal, *The Measef* (Sec. 19)—were assimilationists in their motives and that the revival of Hebrew was to them only a means of introducing the Jews to the general culture.

This opinion was primarily based upon a confusion of causal relationships. In the judgment of their predecessors, the critics had followed the maxim, "By their fruits, ye shall know them," and had concluded that, since the short-lived Haskalah period in Germany was followed by movements of assimilation and mass conversion, the seeds of these fruits lay undoubtedly in the literature of the Haskalah itself. The creators of this literature were, therefore, labeled assimila-

tors and anti-nationalists. The conclusion seemed logical enough, provided the premise was correct. But it was not, for assimilation and the prevalent disregard for all Jewish values were not the fruits of the Haskalah, but arose from entirely different causes, which were discussed in the preceding chapter.

It took almost half a century to correct this erroneous opinion. Only in our own day are voices heard protesting vigorously against this opinion, and writers on the subject take a more charitable view of the activities of the first generation of the builders of modern Hebrew literature.¹ One of them points with telling effect to the real founder of the Haskalah literature, Naphtali Herz Wessely and poignantly asks, "Can you consider a man who was not only thoroughly nationalistic in spirit but one who was deeply saturated with piety and the fear of the Lord, an assimilator?" And even the others who were more liberal in their attitude towards religion, were still far from deserving of the title of assimilators.² This judgment is sustained by the bulk of the extant literature. That some of the leaders of the Haskalah movement, such as David Friedländer and others openly entertained sentiments of assimilation does not materially affect the views advanced. Friedländer's patent sympathy with assimilation, which was so vividly expressed in his flagrant letter to Pastor Teller, ripened at a time when the Haskalah movement was already on the decline; and besides, he and his followers should by no means be taken as representatives of the Haskalah or of its literature. His contribution to both were slight, especially to the latter. The Haskalah literature, on the whole, was dominated by an entirely different spirit than that of assimilation.

On the contrary, as pointed out above, (Sec. 13), the Haskalah movement arose with the intention of stemming the tide of assimilation, the beginnings of which were already evident in the seventies of the eighteenth century, by adjusting Jewish life to modern conditions and making that life survive even in a changed environment. That they did not succeed in their endeavors, they are not to blame. The mighty current of general life and culture was stronger than their feeble efforts, and much of Jewish life and tradition was swept away by its onrush. As a means of effecting that reconciliation between Judaism and secular life, the leaders of the Haskalah employed

¹ See J. Klausner's article, "Three Periods of Haskalah," *Scripta Universitatis* (Kitbe ha-Universita), Vol. III; and M. Kleinman in *Demuyot we-Komot*, Ch. I, pp. 13, 29 ff.

² Klausner, *Ibid*.

literature which aimed at changing some values in Jewry, namely to introduce innovations in education, to inculcate a taste for beauty both in life and letters, and to improve the Jewish economic position by preaching love of manual crafts and industry. They considered the substitution of Biblical language for the mixed jargon of Hebrew employed in Rabbinic books as an effective instrument in changing the one-sided and cramped intellectual life of the ghetto, and they reverted to the language of the Scriptures, for it represented to them the expression of both a simpler and broader life. The Maskilim were also motivated by the desire to create some modern national values, especially a literature which would deal, like all other literatures, with subjects of a nature more secular than religious, and yet be the production of the Jewish nation since it would be written in Hebrew. The writers, however, were conscious of the fact that they would meet with opposition; they were, therefore, very cautious in their procedure. They pleaded with their opponents, they apologized for their innovations, and they attempted to prove from the entire Jewish literature that study of other languages, the knowledge of the sciences, and the cultivation of the Hebrew language were not opposed to the Jewish religion but were enjoined by it. From all that has been said, we can deduce the general character of this literature, that it is both a renaissance and of a revolutionary nature. These main elements determine in turn its more particular characteristics.

First, as an intellectual endeavor to change certain forms of Jewish life and to substitute new values, it assumed both, as all *Tendenz* literatures, an apologetic and a polemic aspect. It apologized for its desire to introduce these new values aiming to prove that these values were neither new nor in any way antagonistic to prevailing religious conceptions. But as no apology is ever complete without polemics, so this literature, like all others of the same kind, contained a certain amount of polemics against the existing order of Jewish life, which these writers regarded as antiquated. And as the attempt by the enlightened met with opposition from the rabbis, the polemic note in the literature became more evident, for every attack engenders a counter-attack.

The second characteristic is one common to all literatures of enlightenment, that is, a desire to raise the cultural level of the people, to inculcate in them a taste for beauty both of nature and language, and to refine their moral feelings. Aesthetics and ethics, were, as is well known, the two leading motives of all European literatures

of enlightenment. They acted as substitutes for the religious sentiments, which the new philosophic tendencies had weakened. The Haskalah literature followed suit, and each writer, who strove to escape the influence of the ghetto, thought it his duty to extol the virtues of beauty or to expound the teachings of morality.

As a result of these tendencies, there arose the third characteristic, namely, the predominance of poetry in that literature. Almost one half of the productions of the period consisted of works written in verse. There was hardly a writer during the first Haskalah period, no matter in what field he really distinguished himself, who did not contribute some poetic pieces dealing with various subjects, and often with subjects hardly amenable to poetic treatment. The pursuit of beauty which animated most of the writers was not a genuine emanation from a soul attuned to the beautiful and harmonious. It arose primarily as a reaction against the drab life of the ghetto from which the writers emerged and especially against the one-sided, stunted literature of Jewry at the time. The desire for beauty, however, expressed itself in beauty of language, of which poetry is its most conspicuous aspect. Poetry, therefore, served as the vehicle of expression for all ideas, whether of an artistic, moral, or publicistic nature. Even exegesis found a place in poetry, as Wessely, the distinguished poet of the generation, explicitly states in the introduction to his epic, *Shirē Tiferet*. "Poetry," says he, "is the best way to arouse the feelings of the reader and to stimulate his understanding, for on account of the brevity of form, its words are impressed upon the soul and are retained in memory." "I have, therefore," he continues, "undertaken to explain the words of the Torah in poetry for the following reasons: first, because the exegete tires the reader by his verbosity who is thus unable to follow him; the poet conveys more by his brevity and chosen similes than the former by his elaborate and wordy comments. Second, the way of the poet differs from that of the exegete, for the latter aims only to explain the words correctly, while the former, in addition to this, presents also the thoughts of the heroes of the Biblical stories and intersperses in his poems noble teachings and moral maxims."⁸ This statement, while it contains some grains of truth regarding the nature of poetry, reflects the rather prosaic attitude of the singers of the Haskalah towards their poetic art.

Another factor which brought about the predominance of poetic production in this literature was the fact that the Haskalah as a renaissance

⁸ *Shirē Tiferet*, Introduction to first book, p. VII.

sance movement had no immediate tradition to follow, and it had to take as its model either the literary productions of the Spanish Golden Age or go back to the Bible. In both of these literatures, the poetic element is much in evidence, for although the Bible contains a good deal of prose, it is used mainly in the portions dealing with law or history. There was no necessity for the Haskalah writers to imitate the style of the legal portions, and as for history, they were not as yet prepared to write on it for lack of material. There remained only the poetic form to serve them as a model, and this they exploited to the fullest extent. Added to this, there was the influence of the European literatures with which all the Haskalah writers were saturated. These literatures excelled at the time in poetic and dramatic productions, and the leaders of the Hebrew renaissance strove to imitate them. It was on account of this that dramas and dramatic poems were written in abundance during a rather short period. The outburst of dramatic productivity was never repeated in the later periods of modern Hebrew literature, for even in its heyday, in the closing years of the nineteenth century, the number of dramas was rather insignificant. These dramas of the Haskalah were not intended for the stage, but were composed merely because the dramatic form, which stands midway between the lyric poem and the long novel, was best suited for the expression of the ideas of the writers who wished to change the social life of their brethren. Besides, the material for such dramas was all prepared for them both in the Bible and in modern European literatures. In addition, the Haskalah writers possessed several excellent models of this art in Hebrew, especially the allegoric dramas of Moses Ḥayyim Luzzatto, who, though he preceded the Haskalah movement, can yet be considered the father of modern Hebrew literature. His followers thus found it convenient to cultivate this particular type of literary endeavor.

The prose writings of the period were primarily, in accordance with the tendency of the movement, of a didactic nature. They consisted of popular treatises on various sciences, grammatical compendia, digests of ethical and religious principles, Biblical commentaries, and short essays either of a biographical or publicistic nature. No attempt was made to develop the narrative phase of literature either in the form of novel or short story. Such efforts usually presuppose a long period of literary activity.

Judging the literary contribution of the writers of the first Has-

kalah period as a whole, we can see that while it undoubtedly was not of the first order, it formed an important link in the chain of Jewish literature, not merely because of its position but because of its intrinsic qualities. The obstacles in the way of the writers were enormous. They had no continuous literary tradition to follow; between them and the literary period of the Golden Age of Spain, there lay an intervening period of six centuries, and, besides, the conditions of life were completely changed. The situation was aggravated by reverting to the Bible, which though an eternal source of inspiration, is still the production of a distant age. Worst of all was the spiritual subjection of the writers to the European literatures of the time. This handicap was pointed out long ago by one of the ablest historians of early modern Hebrew literature, Franz Delitzsch.⁴ And while we cannot agree with his rather harsh judgment that the bulk of this poetic production is devoid of originality and is entirely dominated by the spirit of the Western nations, yet there is much truth in his words. The influence of the European spirit upon Jewish literature undoubtedly lessened its originality, but it did not obliterate it entirely. The literature of the first period of Haskalah was of considerable importance for two reasons. The first was its pragmatic results. It was through it that the human element in the Jew was developed, and although it did not bear the desired fruit in the land of its birth, i.e. Germany, still the more perfect results in the East-European countries are to be traced to it. It served as a foundation upon which the imposing structure of modern Hebrew literature was erected. It saved the Jew from intellectual one-sidedness, which, were it allowed to continue, would have made him a freak in the modern world. Second, it produced some works which survived the ravages of time and are still valuable. Bearing all these features in mind and taking its short-comings into consideration, we shall proceed to survey the literature itself. We shall begin with Moses Ḥayyim Luzzatto, who, though he did not belong to the movement, still was the spiritual guide of the writers of the period.

17. MOSES ḤAYYIM LUZZATTO

Moses Ḥayyim Luzzatto, mystic, poet, and moralist, whose tragic life excites our pity and whose embracing genius calls forth our admiration, was born in the city of Padua, Italy, in the year 1707, the son

⁴ *Zur Geschichte der jüdischen Poesie*, p. 100 ff.

of Jacob Vita. As a child of rich parents, Moses Ḥayyim received a thorough Jewish and secular education. His secular writings evince a perfect mastery of the culture of the day, just as his Kabbalistic, exegetic, and ethical treatises show him a master of all branches of Jewish literature. He had many excellent teachers in both fields of knowledge, but among those who exerted a great influence upon him in his adolescent years when he was at the academy at Padua were Isaac Ḥayyim Cantarini, who instructed him in secular studies and in Hebrew poetry, and Rabbi Isaiah Bassan, who was his master in all sacred subjects and even introduced him to the captivating study of the Kabbala. It is quite probable that his real teacher in Kabbala was not Bassan but Benjamin Cohen, Rabbi at Reggio, and the father-in-law of Bassan, with whom Luzzatto corresponded frequently and on whose death he wrote a fine elegy. Cohen was a disciple of Moses Zacuto (Vol. II, Sec. 36), the mystic and dramatist, and like his teacher, was a devotee of both mysticism and the muses, and it was he who influenced the young Luzzatto in both directions.

Once the Kabbala began to exert its influence upon the susceptible soul of Luzzatto, it did not take long and it captivated him completely. At the age of fifteen, Moses Ḥayyim ceased to attend the academy and established a place of study at his home, where a small circle of devotees of the Kabbala, among them rabbis much older than himself, used to gather daily for the purpose of delving into the mysteries, both theoretical and practical. However, in the first years of his literary activity, Luzzatto devoted himself more to poetry than to mysticism. His first production in this field was a fine elegy for his teacher, Cantarini, written at the age of sixteen. A year later, he composed his rhetoric, *Leshon Limmudim*, in three parts. The book not only showed a mastery of rhetoric and the theory of style, but displayed the first flights of a poetic genius, for Luzzatto illustrated his theories with copious examples of poetic specimens written mostly by himself, among them also a short Biblical drama, *Ma'ase Shimshon* (The Story of Samson). This was followed by his Psalter, containing one hundred and fifty psalms written in imitation of the style of the Davidic Psalms. This youthful production proved later a source of suffering to him, for he was accused by his opponents of composing his Psalter with a view of substituting it, when the Messiah shall have come, for that of David. The crown of this period of activity was the allegorical drama, *Migdal 'Oz* (The Mighty Tower), composed at the age of twenty, in the year 1727,

on the occasion of the marriage of his friend, Israel Benjamin Basan, the son of his teacher Isaiah, to the daughter of Rabbi Menaḥem Raphael Cracovia. It was Luzzatto's wedding gift to the young couple, but it proved to be more than a wedding present to a single couple, for it was a precious gift to modern Hebrew literature, and it ultimately became the foundation upon which Luzzatto's fame as a poet rests.

The succeeding period of activity can be fairly well termed the Kabbalistic. The interest in Kabbala which Luzzatto took even before the age of twenty gradually grew more intense until he was completely engulfed by it. From the year 1727 until 1730, Luzzatto devoted himself entirely to the pursuit of mysticism. It was during this period that he wrote his *Zohar Tinyana* (The Second Zohar), an imitation of the *Zohar*; his treatise on the principles of the Kabbala entitled *Pithē Hokmah* (Portals of Wisdom); and the *Hoker u-Mekubal* (Philosopher and Kabbalist), a defense of the Kabbala in the form of a dialogue between a philosopher and a mystic, and many other works.

He was, however, not satisfied with mere literary activity; he wanted to do more, something great which should bring nearer the coveted aim of all mystics—the redemption. For this purpose, he joined forces with other youths who, like him, were captivated by the Kabbala, and together they formed a circle of devotees who met daily in the house of Luzzatto under his leadership. They drew up a set of regulations which fixed a regimen of high ethical conduct and rigorous piety for the members and emphasized primarily the continuous study of the *Zohar* throughout the day. Being immersed in mysticism, Luzzatto, like many Kabbalists before him, began to believe that his teachings were imparted to him by a mysterious voice which he, like Joseph Karo, (Vol. II, Sec. 58) named the *Maggid* (The Mentor). He believed that most of his Kabbalistic writings were dictated to him by that voice.

For a long time he kept the secret to himself, but ultimately revealed it to two of his disciples, Sabbato Marini and Yekutiel Gordon. This revelation proved his undoing. Yekutiel Gordon hailed from Wilna, Lithuania, and had come to Padua to study medicine at the famous university there; but, on coming in contact with Luzzatto, he was swept away by the current of mysticism and he became one of his disciples. In his enthusiasm for Luzzatto, he wrote two letters, one to Mordecai Jaffe Schloesinger (d. 1754), a merchant in Vienna,

who was also a devotee of the Kabbala, and the other to Rabbi Joshua Heshel of Wilna, wherein he told of the greatness of his master, of his second *Zohar* and of the revelations he received from the mysterious voice, the *Maggid*. The contents of the letters ultimately reached the ears of Rabbi Moses Hages of Altona, who, like his father, was a veteran opponent of Sabbataism. Hages, in his fear lest Luzzatto become a new pseudo-Messiah, decided to nip the movement in the bud and immediately sent copies of Yekuti'el's letters to the rabbis of Venice urging them to investigate the case in order to stem the evil before it took root. The rabbis were lenient with Luzzatto and transmitted to him the correspondence of Hages, warning him to desist from following the dangerous Messianic path. Luzzatto, feeling guiltless, was at first confused, but later wrote to Hages protesting his innocence and pleading with him to cease from strife. The Rabbi, moved by the letter, replied in a conciliatory manner, advising Luzzatto to forsake the Kabbala and also chiding him for being unmarried at the age of twenty-three. Luzzatto also wrote apologetic letters to the rabbis of Venice and Livorno, in which he attempted to justify himself against the accusation of entertaining Messianic pretensions, but at the same time he averred the truth of the revelation of the *Maggid*. His letters, however, were not convincing, and as Luzzatto did not change his ways and continued his teachings, Hages renewed his strife against him.

At first, Hages urged the Italian rabbis to more stringent action, but, not finding a ready response, he turned to the rabbis of Germany, who were zealous for the cause; and finally he obtained a ban against anyone who should write books in imitation of the *Zohar* or any other standard Kabbalistic works. This ban Hages sent to the rabbis of Venice with a strong admonition that they take action against Luzzatto. They were stirred to activity and wrote to Isaiah Bassan warning him about the consequences that might ensue to his beloved disciple if he would not turn from his ways. Bassan then went to Padua, and with great difficulty persuaded Luzzatto to sign a document wherein he promised to abstain from the use of Kabbalistic formulas or composing books on the Kabbala in any language in the name of the *Maggid*. He, however, reserved for himself the right to compose books in Hebrew in his own name, on condition that he should not publish any work without first showing it to his teacher Bassan. This document was signed in the presence of three representatives of the Rabbinate of Venice, and, as a special precaution

against a possible breach of the agreement, Luzzatto delivered all his Kabbalistic treatises to Bassan. These were placed in a box and sealed in the presence of the other rabbis. The tempest was thus temporarily allayed.

The lull that followed was utilized by Luzzatto to good advantage, for he kept aloof from mysticism and devoted himself once more to poetry. From this period of his life, we have a number of noble lyrics which he wrote on certain occasions. During this time he was married to Zipporah, the daughter of Rabbi David Pinzi of Mantua, and upon assuming the responsibilities of married life, he simultaneously assumed the direction of his father's business. At first all went well. Luzzatto managed the commercial affairs quite successfully, but soon the wheel of fortune turned, the family business was shattered, and some of the members of the family decided to emigrate to Amsterdam. His brother settled there and Moses Hayyim intended to follow. In these troublous times, Luzzatto turned again to the Kabbala; he began again to teach it to his friends, and he even wrote a treatise in Hebrew to refute Modena's polemic against the Kabbala (Vol. II, Sec. 155). In accordance with the agreement, he asked Bassan's permission to publish it, which the latter reluctantly granted.

This rather unimportant incident aroused the strife anew. The rabbis of Venice, who were spying upon Luzzatto all this time, found now, with the reverses of his family fortune, an opportune moment to renew the case against him. They availed themselves of his short stay in Venice in the summer of 1735 and presented to him a new document, demanding that he cease teaching the Kabbala and that he take an oath not to publish any work without the consent of the Venetian Rabbinate. This he refused to sign, and as a result, several members of the Rabbinical College, Solomon Zalman of Lvov (Lemberg) and Jacob Belilios, drew up a new list of accusations against Luzzatto. This list, though flimsy enough inasmuch as the evidence was doctored, satisfied the rabbis, and after some deliberation they issued, in the fall of 1736, a ban on Luzzatto's writings.

Luzzatto then left Italy to settle in Amsterdam. On his way to that city, he stopped at Frankfort on the Main, and there new troubles awaited him. Entirely unaware that letters from the Venetian Rabbinate and from Hages had preceded him, he visited the local Rabbi, Jacob Cohen. The latter arraigned him before his court, which decided against Luzzatto in spite of his pleadings; a new docu-

ment, more stringent than all the previous ones, was proposed to him which he signed against his will.

Broken in spirit, he finally left for Amsterdam. There he was received with honor by the Portuguese community and spent a few years in quietude, occupying himself, like Baruch Spinoza, another great spirit though of a different stamp, in grinding glasses for optical instruments. This work gave him leisure for study and for literary activity, but he abstained from teaching the Kabbala to anyone, though he constantly corresponded with his disciples in Italy, urging them to continue their studies of the "science of truth." This correspondence created a new outburst of anger on the part of the fanatics, both in Italy and Germany. As Luzzatto, however, was beyond their reach, the attack resulted only in the transfer of the box containing the manuscripts from the custody of Bassan, who was now suspected of partiality to his pupil, to Jacob Cohen in Frankfort. The latter buried the box with its contents, and thus valuable literary works were lost forever.

During the residence of Luzzatto in Amsterdam, he produced once more a poetic masterpiece, his second allegorical drama, *la-Yesharim Tehillah* (Praise to the Righteous) as well as several treatises in prose, such as the *Mesilat Yesharim* (The Path of the Righteous) containing his ethics, the *Derek Hokmah* (The Way of Wisdom) outlining a curriculum of study, and two more works, one on the Agada and the other on the dogmas.

After eight years of peaceful life at Amsterdam, Luzzatto decided to settle in Palestine, the land he longed for all his life. He left with his family in the fall of 1743 for the Holy Land, and arrived in Safed where he stayed for a few years, making plans undoubtedly to resume his Kabbalistic activity, but his dreams were interrupted by his death in the plague of the spring of 1747. The activity of a great soul was thus cut short in the prime of life, in the fortieth year.

We have described at length the life of this dreamer, mystic, and poet, his struggles, trials and tribulations, his constant striving for the ideal, the hidden, and the intangible. In all these he reflected the activities of a great soul expressing itself in various phases, yet essentially of an harmonious nature. The dualism in Luzzatto which is revealed to us in his Kabbalistic works on the one hand, and the dramas and lyrics on the other hand, is only an apparent one; for essentially mysticism is a form of spiritual poetry, emanating from a soul permeated with an exalted and beautiful conception of God. Still,

the dualism was there, for Luzzatto was a kind of Janus with two faces, one looking backward to the Mediaeval world, carrying on the traditions of the past, and the other facing the future, presaging the opening of a new period in Jewish life where the purely human feelings found full expression beside the sacred, and even expanded at the expense of the latter. This was the contribution of Luzzatto: that he was the first to reveal to a people, which for centuries had led a life of one-sidedness, of concentration upon law and mysticism, the beauty of God's world, and he taught that people to love and admire it. Like the ancient author of the Song of Songs, he sang of pure love and idealized it, but unlike him, not in erotic terms. It is possible that Luzzatto, the mystic, intended his dramas to be merely the vehicle of more spiritual ideas, for they were allegorical. Yet, whatever the intentions were, the dramas as they lie before us are so secular, so intensely human and modern, and so exquisitely wrought, that we enjoy them as fine specimens of art. These qualities are primarily due to the birth-place of the poet and to his education. Having been born and bred in Italy, the home of the classic spirit, he could not help but be influenced by that spirit. His education was a broad and liberal one, as he was not only well-read in the Italian literature of the day, but saturated with it, and when composing his own dramas, he involuntarily imitated the models he knew so well even to the introduction of mythological figures. Luzzatto was both a lyric and dramatic poet, but his fame rests primarily on his dramas, of which he wrote three, the earliest being *Ma'ase Shimshon*, which he composed at the age of seventeen to serve as an illustration of the dramatic theory developed in his rhetoric, *Leshon Limmudim*.

It is primarily a dramatization, with a few additions, of the Biblical story of the life and exploits of Samson. The additions consist in the introduction of several allegorical and mythological figures as *dramatis personae*, such as *Geburah* (Strength), *Heshek* (Cupid), *Shohad* (Bribe), and *Mirmah* (Deceit). The mythological figures are described in good classical style. Thus, Strength is pictured as a woman dressed in a shield and helmet, a sword in her right hand, and a bundle of burning fagots in her left, which picture is a close copy of the statue of Pallas Athena, the Goddess of War, as sculptured by Greek artists; *Heshek* is represented as a young boy with wings on his body who carries in his hand a bow and quiver, the typical Cupid; Bribe is described as a blind man, with scales inclined to

one side in his hand; Deceit as a beautiful maiden with a cup of honey in one hand and a serpent in the other. The representation of the last two abstract personalities is Luzzatto's own, and some of the touches are typically Jewish, for the blindness of Bribe is derived from Deuteronomy, Ch. II, 14, which says, "A gift doth blind the eyes of the wise." The other *dramatis personae* are Samson, Manoah, his father, the Timnaite woman, Samson's first wife, Delilah, Philistine nobles, and messengers.

The drama, as was said, covers the entire life of Samson and is divided into three acts, which are in turn subdivided into a number of scenes. Unlike Milton, Luzzatto was not touched by the deep tragedy of the last days of Samson's life. While the former concentrated his attention upon this point only and succeeded in creating one of the noblest tragedies of all literatures, the latter dismissed this episode in two small scenes which arouse our compassion but slightly. His interest lies in the entire story, and primarily in the amours of Samson with the daughters of the Philistines. Whether this interest was due to the youth of the author or whether it arose from a desire to justify Samson for marrying the daughters of the enemy, cannot be determined. At any rate, the first three scenes in Act I, which depict the struggle in the heart of Samson between his desire for power and the feeling that he is gradually being subjected to the charms of the Timnaite woman, are artistically drawn. Artful also are: Scene X, in which the Timnaite woman is pictured as holding council with Deceit on how to draw out the secret of the riddle from Samson in order to impart it to the Philistine youths; Scene XII, in which Samson, suspicious of his wife's request, struggles to withhold the secret from her, but overcome by love, yields; and Scene XV, in which Samson vents his wrath against the deceit of his wife.

The other two acts simply dramatize the story without attempting to delve deeper into the psychological makeup of the characters. Luzzatto is fair to Delilah and makes her first oppose strenuously the proposal of the Philistine princes that she find out the secret of Samson's strength, pleading her great love for him. On the other hand, he makes her consent readily to the plea of Bribe. The final tragedy of Samson is treated rather weakly with the exception of Samson's monologue against Delilah's deceitful love, which rises to a splendid height. On the whole, the drama presents no stirring scenes, but it is full of human interest. It is pervaded by a secular spirit, and no

attempt is made to inject into it any theological element; and, as such, it is a truly modern production. Luzzatto's description of the power of love strikes a new note in Hebrew poetry; it is neither erotic like Immanuel's (Vol. II, Sec. 30), nor passionate like Najara's (Sec. 39), but is noble and exalted.

Not less of a contribution to the modernity of the drama is its style. Luzzatto liberated the Hebrew verse both from the intricacies and cumbersome devices of Mediaeval Hebrew poetry and from its difficult Arabic meter *Yated u-Tenuah* (Sheva Mobile and Vowel, see Vol. I, Sec. 116). His style is Biblical and simple. On rare occasions, he intertwines complete Biblical verses. The meter consists of eleven vowels for the long line and seven for the short, with special stress upon the accent; rhymes are employed occasionally, especially at the end of the stanzas. This drama, however, was a youthful production; his wings had not yet grown. It was in his later dramas that he attained full mastery of style and content.

Of a much higher calibre in poetic content, dramatic technique, and excellence of style is his second drama, *Migdal 'Oz* (The Mighty Tower) written a few years later. It is a semi-allegorical drama, based, as he himself states, on a parable found in the *Zohar*, containing four acts, the first two of which are subdivided into four and the last two into seven scenes. The parable which serves as the kernel of the drama is briefly as follows: The Torah is compared to a beautiful maiden dwelling in a high tower with a secret entrance; she reveals herself to her lover, who discovers the entrance only after much trial and labor. This parable, however, served to Luzzatto only as a foundation for a much wider and more complicated plot, which can be summarized thus: Once upon a time, there lived a king named Ram, who built a strong and mighty tower, and planted a beautiful garden on its roof, but concealed its entrance. He then proclaimed throughout the kingdom that whoever could enter the tower and ascend to the roof would be given his daughter Shelomit, a beautiful maiden, in marriage. One day, Prince Shalom, son of the king of Anamim, chanced to pass the tower; after much toil, he discovered the entrance to be a door which was plastered over with clay. He ascended to the garden, but not knowing the decree, he left the tower as he had entered it. Soon another man by the name of Zifa passed the tower, and seeing the open door, entered it and ascended to the roof; taking with him the fruit of the garden as evidence of his discovery of the entrance, he rushed to the king to claim the reward.

The king rejoiced at the news and proclaimed the betrothal of Shelomit to Zifa.

Shalom, though, had seen Shelomit and has fallen in love with her, which love she returns. But Ada, a friend of Shelomit, also loves Shalom, and she concocts a plot to kill Shelomit. She sends Bat Shua, the servant of Shelomit, with a present to Zifa from her mistress containing poisoned fruit; at the same time, she informs Zifa through her servant Mirmah of the contents of the present. Zifa then tells the king of Shelomit's treachery. An investigation is made, and it is discovered that Shelomit has met Shalom on a certain day in a hidden dale. It is concluded that she has a lover, and according to an ancient law, Shelomit is led to the stake. Shalom, learning of the fate of his beloved, rushes to the king to offer to be burned in her stead. The king accepts his offer in spite of the protestations of Shelomit that Shalom is innocent, and preparations are made for the execution. Inadvertently, Shalom drops a word about his discovery of the entrance to the tower. The king is both surprised and confused. At that moment, Shalom's words are corroborated by the interpretation of a dream of the king, offered by one of his counsellors, Heman, and Shalom is freed. Zifa confesses his guilt but is pardoned through the intervention of Shelomit. Shalom then marries Shelomit, and, after the death of Ram, becomes king and rules the kingdom with great wisdom for many years.

The drama, however, is more elaborate and complicated, for while the story of the finding of the tower is not touched upon in the play itself but is assumed, there are many other features. In addition to the principal *dramatis personae* mentioned above, Luzzatto introduced Eri, the magician, who loves Ada, and Ayah, a beautiful maiden who loves Zifa, both of whose loves are not returned. Ayah's role is not of great importance, as it was incorporated only to enlarge the scope of action of the drama, but that of Eri is of greater value, inasmuch as some of the noblest monologues are uttered by him. In general, in the technique of the drama and to a great extent in the content of the plot, Luzzatto was not only influenced by the current Italian literature, but even followed closely the famous pastoral drama, *Pastor Fido* (Faithful Shepherd) by Giovanni Battista Guarini (1537-1612). In that drama, Mirtilo, a poor shepherd, loves Amarillis, a lady of high rank, but Corisco also loves Mirtilo and she plots against Amarillis. The lovers are brought together and Amarillis too, in accordance with an ancient law, is sentenced to die. Mirtilo offers

to die in her place, which offer is accepted, but when Montano, the high priest, is about to offer his sacrifice, he discovers in Mirtilo his lost son. Mirtilo is then released in fulfillment of an ancient prophecy which said that the custom prevailing in Arcadia, where the play is laid, of sacrificing annually a maiden to Diana shall be abolished when two persons of divine origin will be united in marriage and when a faithful shepherd will offer himself as a substitute. Mirtilo then marries Amarillis.

As we can see, all the incidents of the *Migdal 'Oz* can be found in Pastor Fido, for in addition to Mirtilo and Amarillis and Corisco, there are also Silvio, the fiancé of Amarillis, and Dorinda, who loves the former. Yet Luzzatto cannot be accused of plagiarism, as he was by Fleischer, for he changed the plot and ennobled it. There was imitation, of course, but Guarini himself had imitated Tasso's drama, *L'Aminta*. Luzzatto, besides introducing the parable of the tower, purged the drama of the gross sensuality in which Guarini's play abounded. The love pictured in *Migdal 'Oz* is pure and noble, not full of passion and lust as in Pastor Fido. In the hands of Luzzatto, the drama became a song of love and harmony which elevates the soul rather than inflames it. In addition, he omitted entirely the motive of the shepherd, though he retained, as we shall see, the love of nature and the adoration of the simple life. He also Judaized the names completely; thus Shalom and Shelomit both connote peace and harmony, and likewise the others bear good Biblical names. On the whole, the *Migdal 'Oz* reads like an original creation.

The literary value of *Migdal 'Oz* consists not so much in its action as in the monologues which the various characters recite. Thus, in Act I, Scene II, we have a very touching soliloquy by Ada, who loves Shalom but whose love is unrequited. In it she bewails bitterly the fate of women who are weak and whose only weapon is their beauty; but when even that fails them, deep misery is their lot. A more stirring monologue is the one produced by Eri the magician, the unrequited lover of Ada, in Scene IV, on the power of love. In it Luzzatto exalts that emotion, one of the elemental forces of life. Eri opens with a complaint against its might and describes the misfortune of those who are smitten by its arrows. But soon he turns around and says "Why accuse love if fools do not know how to guard themselves against the inappropriate use of its power?" He portrays its charms, and asserts that love is the stabilizing power of society, for, without its unifying force, strife would prevail. A fine

comparison between love and fire is then drawn. The latter, the poet says, is a boon to man, but when misused it causes great harm; and likewise, love brings both joy and sorrow to the heart of man. This monologue exerted great influence upon later writers who, consciously or unconsciously, imitated it.

Luzzatto rises to great poetic heights in the third long monologue which opens the first scene in Act III. Shalom, distracted by his love for Shelomit, wandering aimlessly over hill and dale, is suddenly struck by the beauty which surrounds him, and he breaks forth in a song extolling both the charms of nature and the felicity of pastoral life. This is the first expression of longing for the beauties of nature in modern Hebrew literature, and it served as a means of arousing interest in nature in the hearts of the children of the ghetto.

The style of the *Migdal 'Oz* is much more elaborate than that of the *Ma'ase Shimshon*. The meter is largely the same as in the former, but the poet also employs the Spanish Arabic meter of *Yated u-Tenuah*. Yet these difficulties do not prevent him from producing beautiful stanzas. Luzzatto feels that he is master of the language and no obstacles can hinder him. He employs Biblical verses and expressions, and, at times, as in Scene III of Act III, imitates several chapters of the Book of Job, presenting a conversation between Shalom and his three friends, who come to comfort him in his disappointment in love, in the manner of the Biblical dialogues. Yet these imitations of verses and chapters are so skilfully interwoven that they add a special charm to the work. Luzzatto displays also some technical skill in this drama. This is especially exhibited in the introduction of the echo in Scene IV, Act IV. The echo responds to Shalom's thoughts in single words, adding vividness to the monologue. This device was used in Italian dramas and Luzzatto adopted it for his work. In general, the *Migdal Oz* represents a mature production by a man endowed with a poetic genius, who was already conscious of his power.

For a long time, Luzzatto forsook the poetic art except for the composition of occasional lyric poems, and was engaged primarily in Kabbalistic works. But finally, during his few years of rest in Amsterdam, he produced his final drama, *la-Yesharim Tehillah*. It represents the climax of his dramatic art and exhibits his complete mastery of the language in poetic expression, though it displays the influence of reason more than of feeling. It is an allegorical drama in three acts, of five, four, and six scenes respectively, and was written,

like the *Migdal Oz*, on the occasion of the marriage of his friend, Jacob di Gaush, to Rachel Enriques. The dramatis personae are all allegorical, such as *Seḳel* (Reason), *Tehillah* (Fame), *Siklut* (Ignorance), *Hamon* (Populace), *Mehḳor* (Contemplation), etc. The plot is as follows:

To *Emet* (Truth) there was begotten a son named *Yosher* (Righteousness). He said to *Hamon*, "Pledge thy daughter *Tehillah* as a bride to my son." *Hamon* agreed to the proposal and a covenant was concluded. At the same time, *Ta'awah* (Lust), the servant of *Emet*, also gave birth to a son, called *Rahab* (Pride). A war broke out at that time and the enemy entered the city; in the confusion which ensued both children were lost. *Emet* then went to the court to make a deposition of the fact that his son and slave were taken captives, and he gave a description of his son so that when found he should not be mistaken for the slave. Subsequently *Emet* died; years later *Rahab*, the slave, was found and adopted by *Dimyon* (Imagination). *Tarmit* (Falsehood) then advised *Rahab* to pose as the son of *Emet*, and thus marry *Tehillah*. He came to *Hamon* and apprised him of the whereabouts of the son of *Emet*, and the latter betrothed his daughter to *Rahab*.

Yosher meanwhile lived unrecognized among the people. *Tehillah*, though, had seen and loved him. *Rahab* finally pressed *Hamon* to celebrate the wedding, and the latter invited the people of the city to a feast preparatory to the affair. During the feast a storm broke out, and fear seized the guests. One of the old men rose and told them of the loss of the son of *Emet* and of the deposition he made in court containing a description of the boy. He proposed that the identity of *Rahab* be investigated. Upon examination, it was discovered that he was the slave posing as the master's son. *Rahab* was then sent away and *Yosher* was introduced by *Seḳel*, his friend, as the son of *Emet*, and he, of course, was married to *Tehillah*.

Like in *Migdal 'Oz*, the first part of the story, i.e., the loss of the children and the subsequent events are merely hinted at. The first scene in Act I opens with a monologue by *Tehillah*, in which we are told of her dislike of *Rahab* to whom she is betrothed; this is followed in Scene II by a dialogue between *Tarmit* and *Rahab* whom the former tells of his struggles with *Seḳel* in his attempt to sway the mind of *Hamon* and of his hope for ultimate victory. The author thus contrived to convey to us an indirect intimation of the events that had previously transpired. The value of this drama, like that

of the former, consists primarily in the poetic utterances of the characters. Thus, in Act III, Scene III, there are three monologues by *Sekel*, *Yosher*, and *Sablanut* (Patience) which exhibit literary skill and psychological insight. In the first, *Sekel* draws a vivid picture of the fickleness of the mind of the populace, which is swayed like a reed in water and moved easily by falsehood and deceit. He grows pessimistic and exclaims:

How can we call the world built,
When it is all chaos and confusion?

In the second, *Yosher* pours out his heart at his disappointment, and he draws a noble picture of the beauty of nature and the peace of pastoral life, one which he would prefer to that of the city and court with its noise and tumult. *Sablanut* then steps forth, and soothes his aching heart with the advice to trust in God that truth will ultimately triumph. Very skillful is also the monologue of *Siklut* in Scene IV, wherein she mocks at the endeavors of the children of *Sekel* to determine the laws of the universe, measure the heavens, and the stars. All this wisdom, exclaims she, is of little avail to *Sekel* in his plans and in conclusion, she exults in her momentary triumph in succeeding to betroth *Tehillah* to *Rahab*. The second act contains several poetic passages which are both beautiful and elevating. *Sekel's* discourse on the deceptive appearance of things in life contains a fine bit of philosophy. He describes the unreality of the impressions which the senses convey, and points to the changed shape of objects when seen through water, or to the magnified size of things when reflected in a concave mirror as an analogy to the distorted view of life that people possess. In the monologue of Contemplation (*Mehkor*), which follows in Scene II of this act, both Luzzatto's power of description and his conception of harmony in nature reach their highest point. In it there is unrolled before us such a magnificent picture of the life of plants, their constitution, and their development from the tiny upshoot to the gorgeous flower, that we are carried away by its spirit of harmony, as well as by the sense of piety which permeates it. Not only is poetic skill displayed but also scientific precision. This description was never surpassed in modern Hebrew literature.

The style of the last drama is superb in its display of perfect mastery of the language. It is Biblical and yet sufficiently adequate to express

all nuances of feeling, and even the concepts of science. It is entirely metrical, the meter employed being one of the Spanish-Arabic forms, every line consisting of two vowels, *Sheva* and seven vowels, and every short line consisting of two vowels, *Sheva* and three vowels. As he did in *Migdal Oz*, Luzzatto employs also here all the devices of technique, including the echo which responds to the musings of *Tehillah* in Scene IV, Act II. *Tehillah* cherishes the hope that *Yosher* will belong to her in spite of the fact that she is betrothed to *Rahab*. The echo encourages her in her happy dream, and with single words places her in a cheerful frame of mind.

The excellence displayed in *la-Yesharim Tehillah* is probably due not only to the fact that it was written at a later age in the poet's life, but also that it allegorically reflects his personal experience, namely his struggles against the foolishness of people who exchanged his teachings, the Children of Truth, for other teachings. The triumph of *Yosher* undoubtedly symbolizes the hope of the poet that he too will ultimately be recognized as the champion of the right ideas.

The influence exerted by this drama upon later writers was exceedingly great. It was imitated numerous times, and its plot was even utilized by one of the most representative Hebrew novelists, Abraham Mapu in his *Ahabat Zion*. The number of editions of the *la-Yesharim Tehillah* is twenty, a figure which no other Hebrew book has thus far attained.

Though the dramas form the most important part of Luzzatto's literary activity, especially to the modern reader, they represent only a small part of his work, for he was a prolific writer. His works in the various fields of Kabbala, philosophy, logic, rhetoric, and polemics number over thirty, besides many writings which were destroyed by his enemies, an enormous literary output for a man whose life terminated at forty. We shall omit his Kabbalistic works, for they hardly add anything new to the theory of mysticism, and we have already had occasion to refer to the best of them (Vol. II, Sec. 119). Of the others, the following deserve to be mentioned: the *Leshon Limmudim*, the *Derek Tebunot*, and the *Mesilat Yesharim*.

The *Leshon Limmudim* is a rhetoric intended to cover all phases of composition and oratory with special attention to poetry. It consists of three parts. The first deals with principles of rhetoric in general, the second with the application of these principles to Hebrew composition, and the third with the style and the rules of poetry.

Only the first part, however, has been published so far, the other two are still in manuscript.

The first part is divided into eleven lessons or lectures called *Limmudim*. The first lesson is devoted to the definition of rhetorical composition, which is stated to be the art by which one arranges his words, written or oral, in a pleasant manner. The second explains the essence of that pleasantness, which consists in novelty and deviation from the ordinary and commonplace. The novelty is primarily attained by the various forms of beautiful expressions, i.e. by selection of the subject, arrangement of the parts of the composition, construction of sentences, and figures of speech. Seven lessons which form the body of the book are devoted to the elucidation of these principles. Luzzatto displays remarkable skill in the discussion of the subject, but he is too formal and strictly logical. He begins with a lengthy analysis of the phases of various subjects in accordance with the principles of logic. This is followed by a description of the parts of a composition, which are: the introduction, the proposition, the substantiation, and the conclusion. A discussion of the types of composition comes next, and the author deals in detail with the forms of sentences or judgments, enumerating thirty-two such forms; and, likewise, the classification of figures of speech are treated extensively. The last two lessons deal briefly with minor phases of rhetoric. The teachings expounded are all elucidated by illustrations mostly taken from the Bible but some are composed by Luzzatto himself. These illustrations enhance the value of the book, for, though, it is primarily concerned with general principles, the copious Biblical quotations which show their application help us towards an appreciation of the beauty of the Bible. Especially instructive is the chapter on the figures of speech, in which we gain an insight into the skillful use of such figures by the prophets. The style of the book is rather heavy and technical.

The second work, the *Derek Tebunot*, was intended to serve as an introduction to Talmudic discussion. It is limited primarily to an analysis of the elements of Talmudic dialectics or the pilpul method. The method employed by our author is a novel one and differs considerably from those used in earlier introductions, which deal mainly either with the terminology of the Talmud or with rules for deriving decisions of law from it. Luzzatto aims to analyze the logical elements contained in the discussion itself. His excessive formalism and his close adherence to the rules of logic give to the work a dry

aspect, and, though we may profit by the keen analysis of discussions of the Gemarah, we do not gain an insight into the spirit of Talmudic dialectics. Yet it is a contribution to the logic of the Talmud, and it is to be regretted that the method found so few followers.

The third, the *Mesilat Yesharim*, is, beside the dramas, the most popular of his works; and with certain sections of Jewry, it even exceeds the former in popularity. It is an ethical treatise expounding the right and pious conduct of the Jew. Its value, however, does not consist in its theoretical phase, for no attempt is made to found ethics on a psychological or philosophical basis. In fact, the author says distinctly in his preface, "I have not composed this book to teach people what they do not know, but to remind them of what they know, and know well. You will find in this treatise things that the majority of men know and do not doubt as to their truth. But because these things are widely known, they are frequently overlooked and forgotten." The importance of the treatise consists in the purity of its teachings, in the simplicity of presentation, and, to a great degree, in its style.

The arrangement of the book is based on an ethical statement by Rabbi Pinhas ben Yair, a Tanna of the fourth generation, contained in the Mishnah and the Tosephta in several versions,⁵ which says as follows: "Carefulness (in conduct) leads to promptness (Zerizut); promptness to cleanliness (of soul); cleanliness to moderation; moderation to purity; purity to piety (Hassidut); piety to humbleness; humbleness to fear of sin; and fear of sin to holiness." To each of these virtues, Luzzatto devotes four chapters. In his logical way, he defines first the essence of each virtue, then explains its elements, discusses the method of its acquisition, and concludes with a chapter on the obstacles which stand in the way of its possession and how to overcome them. As stated, there is little new in Luzzatto's ethical teachings except the fine, orderly, and systematic presentation. There is, on the whole, an ascetic and other-worldly ring to his ethics. In the very opening chapter, he tells us that the real place of man is the other world, and that this world is only a preparatory school for man's proper destination. In another place, he tells us, "that laughter distorts the human heart so that it cannot be ruled any more by reason." Again, when he speaks of moderation (Prishut), he warns man not to be misled by the allurements of this world. Yet his

⁵ The version followed by Luzzatto is the one quoted in T. B. *Abodah Zarah* 20b. The one given in the Mishnah, *Sotah*, Ch. IX follows a different order.

asceticism, in spite of his Kabbalistic tendencies, is not of the extreme type; he speaks severely against those who want to acquire saintliness by means of long prayers, weeping, and self-inflicted pain. On the whole, he emphasizes right conduct, purity of soul, and love of God. "That love," says he, "consists of three elements: Cleaving unto Him so that He becomes the center of man's thoughts and actions; joy in worshipping Him; and zeal for His honor." The crown of this rigorous ethical life is holiness. Luzzatto knows well that only a few can attain this degree, for holiness is the stage at which human life becomes pure spirituality, and he therefore says that only a part of it can be reached by human endeavor, for its mastery is a gift of God.

The ethics of Luzzatto covers both religious and social conduct, and while he emphasizes the pietistic phase, he lays great stress upon the social virtues, and in the description of that type of conduct he evinces keen insight into human nature. There is little of the modern spirit in the *Mesilat Yesharim* except its style which is light, simple, and even graceful; and at times, it is hardly believable that the same man, who sang so beautifully of pure human love and pictured so vividly the joy in the beauty of nature, could write this work which, though noble and pure, is austere and rigorous. Yet he is the father of modern Hebrew literature, and none can deny his claim to that exalted position. Such is the riddle of the human soul; it reflects not only one world, but is sometimes a meeting-point of worlds.

18. NAPHTALI HERZ (HARTWIG) WESSELY

If Luzzatto was the forerunner of the first Haskalah period, Naphtali Herz (Hartwig) Wessely (1725-1805) was the one who actually opened that period and was certainly one of the towering figures of the literature produced during that span of time. Wessely, like Luzzatto, was a prolific writer in several fields, but unlike him, he was far from the spirit of mysticism; for though he possessed deep piety and religious enthusiasm, he was saturated with the rationalism of his day, and is thus a typical representative of the age. His literary activity embraced exegesis, studies in Hebrew synonyms, ethics, essays on problems of Jewish life, and poetry. His fame, however, rests primarily on the last two branches of endeavor. It is as a poet and champion of enlightenment that Wessely was distinguished in his time and remembered by later generations, though his exegesis and studies in the nature of Hebrew expression can by no means be

minimized. As his poetry outweighs his publicistic activity, we shall deal with it first.

In the field of poetry, however, only few can attain immortality and only the chosen are called to the place of honor. Wessely, with all his mastery of the Hebrew language and with his skill and warmth of soul, cannot be said to be among those few. Time has tarnished much of his poetic fame. His generation crowned him as *the* poet, and the one immediately succeeding it still hailed him as a great singer. But those that came much later thought differently. Some there were, such as Graetz and Kovner, who wanted to rob Wessely entirely of the claim to the title poet, while others were more lenient. The truth, however, lies, as usual, in the middle. Wessely was a poet after his own kind, and though his muse did not soar to great heights, he was animated by a poetic spirit and his lyre emitted from time to time sweet melodies which touch the chords of our heart.

The character of Wessely's poetry can be briefly described as religious-lyrical. He was the true heir of the Psalmists in the expression of their love of God and their reverence of His majesty. Whenever he is moved by such pious sentiments he is poetically strong and vigorous, but when his theme is not saturated with such lofty feelings, he is only a skillful and masterly writer of verses. On the whole, Wessely has no eye for the beauty of nature nor any sentiment for pure human love, the two important criteria by which poets are usually judged in modern times. In his description of nature, he falls far below the Psalmists and the poets of the Bible, whom he took as his models, and only on rare occasions do we find lines which move us by their portrayal of the charms of nature. But in his own field, to which we may add that of didacticism, he is quite powerful. Had he devoted himself to lyrics and didactic poems, we should have had in Wessely a great modern religious-ethical poet. But he chose to write an epic poem, a work which was beyond his abilities, and, as a result, the work, though beautiful in language and excellent in form, is not a work of art which can survive through the ages. Still, parts of it display poetic spirit, depth of feeling, and all the lyrical elements.

The magnum opus of Wessely is the *Shirê-Tiferet*, an epic poem dealing with the exodus of the Jews from Egypt, divided in six parts, containing eighteen cantos. He began to work on this poem late in life, when he was close to sixty, and assiduously touched and re-touched it until the day of his death, and then it still remained un-

finished. The first five parts were published during the author's life, but the last part which remained in manuscript for twenty-four years, was added in 1829 in a new edition of the entire poem published by his son with the assistance of Moses Landau of Prague.

Historians of the period and biographers of Wessely assign a number of motives for the composition of this poem late in life. Some ascribe it to his interest in the Book of Exodus; some attribute it to a dream of the teacher of Wessely's children, in which he was asked to urge the poet to undertake a work of this kind; and some assert that it was the words of Herder which influenced Wessely to compose the *Shirē-Tiferet*. Herder expressed in his famous work, *Vom Geiste der hebräischen Poesie* (On the Spirit of Hebrew Poetry), his great surprise that, while there were many poems written in various languages with a Biblical content, there was none devoted to the law-giver, Moses, whose life with its many vicissitudes and great work could serve as excellent material for poetic treatment. He stated explicitly that the poet who could execute such a work would not be a German, but a Hebrew-German. "For him," he said, "the task is a natural one and his instinctive reverence for and knowledge of the hero would supply a deeper penetration into his character than that of any German." These words spurred Wessely to add to the honor of his people by singing the glories of the peerless leader. He was also influenced by the example of Klopstock's *Messiasde*, which he took as a special model in the writing of his *Mosaide*, the name given to the *Shirē-Tiferet* by the German translators and by his son in the title-page to his edition.

But though the poem is thus entitled, and it is quite possible that Wessely himself named it *Mosaide*, it is not properly so. The Hebrew title-page describes the book as aiming to tell the praises of God and the wonders He had performed on behalf of our ancestors from the beginning of the Exodus to the revelation at Sinai. The course of events at that time, and not Moses, is the central theme of the poem. He is an important figure in the epic, but not its hero. The book is, therefore, properly divided according to the sequence of events in the period of redemption. The first part, containing four cantos, tells of the persecution of the Jews by Pharaoh, of the birth of Moses, of his childhood spent in the royal palace, of the awakening of his Jewish consciousness, of his going out among his brethren, and his marriage to Zipporah, the daughter of Jethro. The second part describes in three cantos the scene of the burning bush where Moses

was first told of his great mission, his journey into Egypt, and the first visit of Moses and Aaron to Pharaoh. In the third part, the poet recounts in three cantos the wondrous deeds of God as revealed in the first six plagues. The two cantos of the fourth part are devoted to the recital of events caused by the other four plagues. The fifth and sixth parts, of three cantos each, tell about the crossing of the Red Sea, the miracles performed in the desert, the descent of the manna, the quail, the flowing of the water from the rock, the war with Amalek, the visit of Jethro, and finally the giving of the Law at Sinai. The last event is described in a rather sketchy manner because death overtook the author.

The canvas stretched before the poet was thus large enough; and if Wessely would have possessed the brilliant colors and the delicate tints, he might have presented a series of exquisite pictures. But in this he failed. The great defect of the *Shirê-Tiferet* is that it is more of a narrative in verse of the Biblical stories than a poetic elaboration. Wessely, as one present-day historian of modern Hebrew literature points out,⁶ clung too much to the literal text of the Bible and did not give enough room to the play of poetic imagination. Even Franz Delitzsch, who was much closer to his time, saw his defect. He said of this epic, "Wessely's style flows on in a melodious manner like a clear stream, but the bottom of this stream is not made up of the colored gravel, the glistening golden sand, and the glimmering pearls of Oriental legend."⁷ This German critic was quite aware that Wessely was saturated with the spirit of the Bible, but he missed in him the oriental nuances and colorfulness. A still greater defect of the poem, however, is the rigorous didacticism pervading it. The poet himself repeats again and again that his purpose in composing the poem is not merely to please his readers but to teach them the deeper meaning of the stories of the Bible and to inculcate it in their hearts. In another place he says, "We wrote these poems not for the purpose of attaining poetic sweetness and glory by the beauty of their composition, but we indited them for the glory of God and His Torah."⁸ In addition, he was very eager to include in the poems as many exegetic comments as possible. All these tendencies detract from the poetic value of the work. Wessely even omitted to depict the peculiar charm of the desert or to describe the contact between

⁶ J. Klausner, *Toldot ha-Safrut ha-Ibrit ha-Hadashah*, pp. 122-124

⁷ F. Delitzsch, "Zur Geschichte der jüdischen Poesie," p. 99.

⁸ *Shire-Tiferet*, Pt. III, p. 94; Pt. V, p. 110.

the Jews and the great Egyptian civilization, touches which we might have expected in an epic of such magnitude. Nor is even the character of Moses, the most important figure if not the central theme in the work, drawn in the vivid colors in which such a personality should have been depicted. There is little psychological insight into the soul of this great character; only on rare occasions do we get a glimpse into the workings of that soul.

Yet, we should err were we to assume that the *Shirē-Tiferet* is only of interest in literary history and has no poetic value. There is an element there which possesses permanent worth, and that is the lyrical introductions to the cantos. Wessely, in imitation of the classical masters, who invoked the muses for inspiration prefaces his cantos with invocations to God for help. These introductory poems, if separated from the text, make a fine collection of religious lyrical poems. They possess deep sentiment, fine reflections upon man and his relation to God, and elevated thoughts upon His majesty and power. In these poems, we feel the palpitation of a religious heart saturated with awe and reverence for the Infinite Being. Thus, in his introduction to the first canto, after giving a brief sketch of the principal events of the Book of Genesis, beginning with Adam and ending with the subjection of the Jews in Egypt, he concludes with a touching invocation to God to inspire him with His spirit that he may recite His glories to his own children. Here we have stanzas as beautiful as the following:

If Thou but teach my lips to sing,
Then a new song I'll bring,
A pearl from wisdom's sea.
Wide are the waves that toss,
Vast the expanse to cross.
Oh, God, carry Thou me.

Then will my song bring joy and banish pain
And be the oil to light men's souls again
If dim their flame,
For of Thy wonders and Thy might I'll sing,
Of glorious Moses like unto a king,
To glorify Thy Name.

The introductory poem to the fifth canto tells in fine measured and rhymed verses of the interest God takes in the humble. There is nothing too small to escape the attention of the all-merciful God.

The invocation poem prefacing Canto VIII recites the glories of God in creation and His rule of the world, which rewards the righteous and punishes the evil-doers. One of the exalted lyrical introductions is the one to the tenth canto, which takes man as its subject. It opens with a description of the rise of idolatry, its devious ways as illustrated by the Egyptian worship, and concludes with a description of the dire punishment of the idolators. Very beautiful and permeated with a spirit of the purest love of humanity is the introduction to the seventh canto. Its theme is the equality of all men before God. In delicately wrought verses, the poet tells of the good that is found in all men, of their common share in the divine gift, and the value of man irrespective of his descent. Thus sings the poet:

The mighty cedar and the grass below
Both drink of Heaven's dew and rain, and grow
In vale and on the height; alike to all
Clouds let their gentle blessings fall.
So to each man who upward strives in love
God's goodness, like the dew, comes from Above.

Again

If man was in God's image wrought,
Then lineage means less than nought,
So why inquire as to man's pedigree,
His crest, his wealth, or his nobility?

The soul of man alike is blessed
Whether he hails from East or West,
And Wisdom is his seal and crest,
And Righteousness, of pedigrees the best.

All these invocation poems are written in meter and rhyme, while the narrative part consists mostly of blank verse.

In addition to the introductory poems, there are many passages in the narrative in which the author rises to poetic heights. Such are the description of Miriam's feeling upon seeing her infant brother lowered in the river, in the second canto; Moses' sentiments when observing the misery of his brethren and his struggle with himself when he is about to kill the Egyptian who smote the Jew; and the vivid description of the arrival of the animals into Egypt on the behest of God, in the third canto.

There are also lucid didactic passages, where exalted ideas are unfolded in appropriate language. Of these there is to be especially noted

the long passage in the seventeenth canto, in which the idea of the mission of Israel and his destiny is developed. In words full of strength and pathos, the poet speaks of the selection of Israel as a people of God. The didactic spirit is also displayed in his description of the heroes. Wessely seldom rose above his time, and though pious, was saturated with the spirit of rationalism, which also pervades the poem. Moses, the daughters of Jethro, Jethro himself, and the other figures mentioned above are all stamped with that spirit. They are all lovers of wisdom and champions of enlightenment.

All these traits make the *Shirê-Tiferet* a great work, but not a great epic. The tenor of most of the cantos is of ordinary level, and, except for the invocations, Wessely seldom displays flights of poetic imagination.

Wessely wrote many other poems on various occasions, such as those in honor of Emperor Joseph II on the occasion of his issuing the Edict of Toleration, in honor of Mendelssohn on the appearance of his translation of the Pentateuch, and similar events. Such a poem too, is the elegy he wrote at the death of Duke Leopold of Brunswick, who was drowned while saving others from a watery grave. Wessely was stirred by the act of altruism, and in his elegy he expresses moving sentiments on the purpose of human life, of which those embodied in the following stanzas are a fine illustration:

How can we call the righteous dead,
Or life—a life of wrong and dread?
A guiltless soul can ne'er be slain,
A sinner's life is ever vain.
For what is life? But strife and care;
We all must die, there is no gain
In years of sin that blanch our hair.

If man's whole task, his only need,
Is daily bread on which to feed,
Then death's a blessing in disguise.
No! Moral force and height of soul
Are life's concern, man's only goal.
He who is noble, who is wise,
Enjoys a life we may all prize.⁹

⁹ Elegy on Prince Leopold of Brunswick, published in *ha-Measef* for the month of Tamuz, 1785. Translation taken from J. L. Landau's "Short Lectures on Modern Hebrew Literature," p. 59.

The real contribution of Wessely to Hebrew poetry, however, was his style. He was the pathfinder of modern Hebrew poetry. Luzzatto had already shown that good poetry could be written in plain meter without subjecting it to the artificiality of the involved Spanish-Arabic forms of metrics, though he himself employed them in a number of his poems. Wessely discarded them entirely and introduced the syllabic meter. This consists of a line of twelve and a half vowels divided by a cesura, or a shorter line of eleven. His stanzas consist of six lines divided into two parts of three lines each, in which he rhymes the last line of the first part with the last line of the second, and the two first lines of each part with each other, thus aab ccb. His forms of meter and stanza became the standard models of versification and were followed by all poets for a period of over sixty years. But of still greater importance are the inner qualities of his style. He not only revived the Biblical style in literature, but introduced into the Hebrew language an elasticity and vividness which made it adaptable for use in all subjects. His *Shirē-Tiferet* was the first attempt to write in Hebrew an epic poem on such a large scale, and in doing so, he moulded the language in various ways and made it pliable enough for nuances and shades of meaning. Wessely's influence exceeded that of Luzzatto, for he was in the very center of the Haskalah movement, while the former was removed both in space and in time. His *Shirē-Tiferet* served as a model of imitation for later poets, and, according to one historian of modern Hebrew literature, there are more than twenty poetic productions in which the influence of Wessely's epic is evident in a large degree.¹⁰

Turning to the other phase of Wessely's activity, we must note first his championship of the movement of enlightenment. This was expressed in a series of letters to various Jewish communities, later collected in book form under the title *Dibrē-Shalom we-Emet* (The Words of Peace and Truth). The first letter of the series, written in 1782, was sent by him immediately after the issuance of the Edict of Toleration by Joseph II of Austria, as a call to the Jews of Austria-Hungary to avail themselves of the opportunities offered by the Edict and to improve their system of education. Like all the enlightened of his time, Wessely believed that this Edict, which abolished a number of Mediaeval restrictions of Jewish rights and granted them many privileges, such as freedom of movement, trade, and the right to found schools, was the beginning of a new era in

¹⁰ F. Liachower, *Toldot ha-Safrut ha-Ibrit ha-Hadashah*, Vol. I, p. 76.

Jewish life. He considered the new laws concerning the Jews the first step in their complete emancipation, and he thought it his duty to urge the Jews of the Empire to modernize their system of education in order to raise a generation trained in both the Torah and secular studies, who should evoke the respect and admiration of their neighbors.

The letter intended to outline a program for a new system of education among the Jews to replace the one which prevailed in all communities where the curriculum consisted primarily of the study of the Talmud with scant instruction in the Judaeo-German vernacular. Being aware, however, of the distrust of the Jews of his time of attempts to introduce innovations in their lives lest they affect the loyalty and devotion to the religion of their fathers, Wessely proceeded cautiously. He devoted a number of chapters in his treatise to prove that not only is the study of secular subjects compatible with religious principles but that the acquisition of such knowledge will strengthen one in the mastery of the Torah and will improve his conduct both as a man and as a Jew.

The letter, consisting of a number of chapters, opens with a discussion on the two phases of Jewish education. Education has, according to our author, two aims, one to instruct the young in human knowledge and the other in the law of God. The first embraces all such subjects which are necessary to man as man, namely a training in manners, in ethics, in the acquisition of virtue, and in the acquaintance with at least the elements of history and geography. In a broader sense, though, that kind of knowledge is more embrative and includes the sciences of mathematics, astronomy, and the other physical sciences; in short, all such subjects which man can reach through his own reason. The divine laws stated in the Torah are undoubtedly higher than the knowledge attained by reason, yet they must be preceded by it. "It was so," says our author, "in the history of the human race, for as the Midrash says, 'The knowledge of the way of the world preceded that of the Torah for twenty-six generations,'"¹¹ for the Torah was not given until twenty-six generations after Adam. During the time preceding that event, men conducted themselves in accordance with the seven Noahide precepts, which are based on reason."¹² Instruction in proper conduct and in the most necessary secular subjects should, therefore, serve as a foundation for the study

¹¹ *Leviticus Rabba*, Ch. IX.

¹² See Ch. I, note 37, for the explanation of the Noahide precepts.

of the Torah. To prove the importance of such knowledge, he quotes a Midrashic statement which reads, as follows: "A scholar who has no other knowledge, even a carcass is better than he."¹⁸ He interpreted the statement to mean that a Jewish scholar who has no secular knowledge is worse than a carcass, for the eating of carcass is prohibited by the Torah only to the Jews but may be eaten by others, while a Jewish scholar who is ignorant of secular studies is of little value either to Jews or Gentiles, for he lowers the honor of the Torah.

Wessely then devotes a few chapters to prove that in ancient Jewry and even during the time of exile, stress was always laid upon the training of the children in human knowledge; but he complains bitterly that in the last few hundred years, the Jews, especially in Germany, have forsaken that knowledge and are teaching their children only Talmud and some Bible in poor translation, thus leaving them ignorant of all instruction necessary to man as man. Such a narrow education, he claims, is not compatible with the honor of the Jews, who are called in the Bible a "wise and understanding people," and is injurious to their standing among the nations. He is quite aware that this situation is not entirely due to the Jews themselves, but to the persecutions which had estranged them from all pursuit of secular knowledge. But in view of the changed situation as evidenced by the Edict of Toleration, there is no longer any excuse for clinging to the old system of education.

He then proceeds to outline a system of education for the youth. There should be, he says, various grades in the school and a special program for each grade. In the first grade, the students should be instructed in the Hebrew language and grammar; in the second, in Bible and ethics. The Bible should be taught according to Mendelssohn's German translation, so that they will ultimately master both languages and speak pure German. Before the students enter the third grade, where Mishnah is taught, an examination is to be held, and if a student is found unfit for the study of the Mishnah, he should rather learn a trade and merely continue his previous studies. A further examination is to be given to the students on the completion of their course in the third grade to determine whether they should continue their studies in Talmud in the highest grade or be advised to turn to some other occupation. Those who study the Talmud should simultaneously be instructed in the necessary secular knowledge, such as history, geography, and mathematics. In this way, con-

¹⁸ *Leviticus Rabba*, Ch. I.

cludes Wessely, we shall raise great men in Israel, who will be versed in all phases of Jewish law as well as in other branches of knowledge, who will do honor to the Jewish name. He urges also that special books be written wherein the principles of the Jewish religion, as well as a general survey of all the laws and precepts, should be given, and that text-books be composed for the teaching of ethics and good conduct. Thus, even students who will not continue in the study of the Talmud will be grounded in the knowledge of the laws and customs of Israel.

As soon as the letter was published, a storm of protest broke out against Wessely on the part of the leaders of Orthodoxy. They saw in his plan an attempt to undermine Judaism. These honest but short-sighted people felt that the established form of Jewish life was shaking to its foundations, and the more they sensed the danger, the more wroth they were with one who made any attempt to alter that form. They denounced Wessely in the most opprobrious terms, calling him a heretic, and they accused him of desiring to cause the Torah to be forgotten in Israel. His most bitter opponents were Rabbi Ezekiel Landau of Prague (Vol. II, Sec. 70) and Rabbi David Tevele of Lissa. The latter devoted a special sermon to Wessely, in which he denounced him severely. It is also quite possible that the Gaon of Wilna protested against Wessely's pamphlet, and, according to Rabbi David Tevele, it was even burned publicly in Wilna.

These outbursts of protest shocked the gentle and pious Wessely, but, feeling that he was championing a righteous cause, he did not waver, but resolutely carried on his struggle for the spread of enlightenment among his brethren. In the second letter, which he sent to the heads of the community of Trieste who consulted him on the program of the school which they were about to found, he repeated his demands for a change in the system of education, but in a more moderate tone. Wessely utilized this opportunity to reply to his opponents, and he expressed his astonishment at the vehemence of their attacks. He claimed that the rabbis misinterpreted his words, that he did not mean to minimize the study of the Torah, nor did he mean to imply that a Jewish scholar who lacks knowledge of secular sciences is not to be respected; all that he urged was that the scholar be trained in proper conduct and ethics. He also defended himself against the accusation by his opponents that he advocated that the Jewish children be trained first in all sciences before they begin the study of the Torah, and he explained that he only insisted on an

elementary knowledge of Hebrew grammar and the German language. He further pointed out that his purpose in demanding a thorough training in religion was to promote the fear of the Lord. He appended to the letter a complete program for the school in accordance with his principles.

Wessely found supporters for his view in the Italian rabbis, who were more broad-minded than their Polish and German colleagues and who were, as a rule, trained in secular studies. These came to his rescue, and a number of them sent him encouraging letters, which he published as the third part of the book.

Neither his own moderate tone in the second letter, however, nor the rallying of the Italian rabbis to his support had any effect upon his opponents, who continued to attack him. They even attempted to prohibit the publication of his book by the government, but the enlightened friends of Wessely, especially Mendelssohn and David Friedländer, intervened, and the opposition was forced to desist from such measures. He found it necessary to write a more extensive reply to his opponents, which reply forms the fourth and last part of the book. In this part, he first defines more clearly the term "human knowledge" (*Torat ha-Adam*), which he insisted, in his first letter, precedes the study of the Torah. He states explicitly that it includes only instruction in conduct and ethics, though in a broader sense it may also embrace all sciences. He then devotes a large portion of the essay to a refutation of the charges of Rabbi David Tevele, quoting selections from his sermon. He deplores Tevele's narrow-mindedness, but he does not speak of him disrespectfully. He finally makes a passionate appeal for the study of the sciences and other secular subjects, and he proves that at least an elementary knowledge of these subjects is necessary for the proper understanding of the Bible and the Talmud. Wessely concludes the essay with a statement averring the honesty of his intentions in the struggle for enlightenment, and he states that he was moved to write his first letter only by his love of Israel and the Torah. There is a pathetic note in his conclusion, for he was already disappointed in the results of the Haskalah, because some of the new schools founded by the enlightened stressed the study of secular subjects more than that of the Torah. He reproaches his opponents for not cooperating with him in the improvement of Jewish education, for then the results would have been different, and he ends with the mournful words of Job, "Thistles

grow instead of wheat, and cockle instead of barley." (Job, XXXI, 40).

Of the other works of Wessely, those that deserve mention, are his Commentary of the Book of Leviticus, published in Mendelssohn's edition of the Pentateuch; his translations of the Apocryphal book, the Wisdom of Solomon; his book on Hebrew synonyms, entitled *Gan Na'ul*; and his *Sefer ha-Midot* (Book of Ethics). In his commentary, he displays not only a keen sense of language, but a mastery of exegesis and wide Talmudic learning. In it, he endeavors to show how the oral laws embodied in the Tannaitic Midrashim are clearly deduced from the verses of the Pentateuch, if the real meaning of the words be rightly unfolded. The commentary evoked great praise from orthodox rabbis, and it received, according to the testimony of a disciple, the approval of the Gaon of Wilna himself. The translation of the Wisdom of Solomon, which was one of Wessely's earlier works, earned for him the title of *Meliz* (Master of Style), for in it we have the earliest example of writing in fine, elastic, and vivid Biblical style. He appended to it a long commentary, named *Ruah Hen* (The Spirit of Grace), wherein he discusses at length the distinctions in the nuances of Hebrew words.

The Book of Ethics, of which only one volume was published, is divided into three parts dealing with important ethical problems in a systematic and theoretical way. Wessely, who, though not a philosopher was acquainted to a certain degree with the philosophical theories of his time, devotes his first part to a description of the essence of the soul. He concludes with a chapter on the powers of the soul, wherein he adopts the Platonic tripartite division of its faculties as well as the comparison, developed in the Republic, of the soul to a state. The second part, entitled "The Faculties of the Soul" (*Kohot ha-Nefesh*), discusses its principal faculties, such as intuitive knowledge, understanding, reason, and will, as well as some of the virtues. The book, on the whole, contains little original thought, but is permeated by a spirit of piety and pure religiosity.

19. THE MEASEF-GROUP

A literary movement must necessarily have a starting point, a nucleus from which the impulse to produce and to bring into actuality the potential and intellectual and spiritual forces, emanates. This point of support usually takes the form of a literary organ, which

serves both as a center around which talents rally and as a vehicle of expression. In the course of time, it happens frequently that the movement becomes ramified and the activity of each of the writers intensified until it assumes an importance of its own, reaching far beyond the ideas and ideals of the organ which called forth that activity. Yet, the historian of literature, in his search for a term which should characterize the productions of a certain group of writers whose work, though varied, was yet animated by a general unity of spirit, cannot find a more fitting one than the name of that organ which first served as a center of their literary impulses. The first Haskalah period in its two epochs had two such centers or nuclei, the *Measef* (The Gatherer) and the *Bikkurê ha-'Ittim*, and, accordingly, in our endeavors to give a general survey of the activities of the first of these epochs, we include the different writers under the general name of the *Measef-group*.

The publication of the *Measef*, a monthly journal, as we have noted above, was initiated at Königsberg by a group of four enlightened young men, Isaac Eichel, Mendel Bresslau, and the brothers Simon and Zanzvil Friedländer, who, uniting under the name of "The Society of the Friends of the Hebrew Language," issued a prospectus to all lovers of Hebrew, called by the euphuistic name of *Nahal ha-Besor* (The Stream of Good Tidings). In the prospectus, they outlined the program of the Journal. It was supposed to contain four literary divisions: (a) poems, both original and translated; (b) articles; 1), on grammar and the science of the Hebrew language, 2) exegetic comments, 3) on scientific and ethical subjects including didactic essays, either original or translated, 4) on Talmudic subjects, and 5) essays on both moral and physical education; (c) biographies of great men; and (d) contemporary events. They incorporated in the prospectus a letter from Wessely, written in response to their invitation to participate in the *Measef*. In this letter, the pious poet advised them to include articles and stories of a religious content, to omit in the translated poems the names of the pagan gods, and not to publish love songs of an erotic character nor satires upon Jewish customs. The publishers and editors had, as it seems, tacitly accepted the advice of Wessely by incorporating his letter in the prospectus. The *Measef*, in the first years of its publication, was conservative in its tone and displayed none of the liberal tendencies which, according to the opponents of the Haskalah, aimed at the undermining of religious belief and piety. It devoted itself to spread-

ing knowledge and enlightenment according to their program. For the first three years, 1784-1786, it was published at Königsberg under the editorship of Eichel and Bresslau. In the year 1787, "The Society of Friends of the Hebrew Language" became the "Society of the Friends of Goodness and Virtue," and removed its seat to Berlin, where, after a lapse of a year, it renewed the publication of their periodical. It appeared in Berlin for three years under the editorship of Aaron Halle-Wolfsohn and Joel Bril. During the second period, the journal became more radical and more responsive to the problems of life. In 1791, the publication ceased again, and the attempts to re-issue it met with little success. Thus, during four years (1794-1797), a single volume of the journal was published by issuing at indefinite periods single numbers. A more strenuous and persistent attempt was made twelve years later, in 1809, by the poet Shalom ha-Cohen, to renew the publication for a third time, and he succeeded in issuing it regularly for three years, though in different cities, Berlin, Altona, and Dessau; and still later, in 1829, a final endeavor was made by Jacob Fürstenthal to resuscitate it once more, but only one volume appeared.

The series of unsuccessful attempts to continue the existence of the *Measef* shows both the influence it had on its readers and the decline of the real Jewish spirit in Germany, the cradle of the Haskalah. In that land, life was ahead of the movement; the desire for secular studies and for assimilating Jewish life to the general one was so strong, that it made the efforts of the enlightened seem reactionary. The youth, in their eagerness to escape the ghetto, left behind not only the Talmud but also the Bible and the Hebrew language, and consequently there was no need for a Hebrew organ. The various strata of the *Measef* clearly reflected these changes, for while the contributors of the first edition hailed mainly from Germany, those of the third were mainly from lands of Eastern Europe, from Slavic countries. Yet, during the entire first period of the Haskalah, Germany was not altogether barren of men to whom the Haskalah was the breath of life, and to these the *Measef* was a rallying point, and hence the repeated efforts to resuscitate it. The journal, therefore, was a great factor in the development of modern Hebrew literature, especially in the first period of its appearance. During that period, it was a center and meeting-ground not only for the writers of Germany, but also for those of other lands, and its influence reached many Jewries. Many were the writers who

participated in the volumes of the first edition of the *Measef*, but the most important, aside from Wessely and Mendelssohn, who published in its columns several articles and a poem, were Isaac Eichel, Joel Bril, J. L. Ben-Zeeb, Isaac Satanow, Baruch Lindau, David Caro, and David Franco-Mendes. It is these who can rightly be characterized as the *Measef*-group.

i. The oldest of the group was Isaac Satanow (1732-1805). He was born at Satanow in Podolia, a Polish province, but, having been imbued through some channel with the spirit of enlightenment, he came at the age of forty to Berlin. Here he studied physical sciences and philosophy, but mastered only the former. He made the acquaintance of David Friedländer, Mendelssohn, and others, and these supported him in his literary undertakings.

The literary activity of Satanow was many-sided. He wrote poetry, essays on scientific subjects and on problems of Jewish life, composed grammars and dictionaries, books on ethics, imitations of the *Zohar*, and edited a number of standard Jewish philosophical and poetic books, adding his own commentaries and notes, and finally he published two collections of proverbs and psalms in imitation of the Psalms of David and the Proverbs of Solomon. The scattered nature of Satanow's activity reflects the diversity and instability of his own character. He was at one and the same time a believer and a heretic, a teacher of ethics and one guilty of moral infractions, a man of extensive knowledge in many fields but not master in one. His chief fault was his inclination to pass his works as pseudepigraphic, that is, as compositions of men of ancient origin. The authors were sometimes given as anonymous and sometimes bore invented names. Furthermore, he forged letters of approbation, signed by rabbis unknown to anyone, who sang the praises of the manuscripts Satanow published. His edition of the standard works displayed the same characteristics of insincerity and light-mindedness, for they were inaccurate and full of errors. Satanow did not even hesitate to doctor the text according to his pleasure, omitting passages and adding some of his own. Yet some of his works have permanent value, if not for their content, then for their style, for he was a master of the Hebrew language, and in his day he not only helped to spread knowledge among his brethren, but contributed much to the introduction of a pure Hebrew style.

Of his numerous works, the most important are: a collection of poems under a peculiar title, *Iggeret ha-Yakar* (An Epistle on the

Halo of Glory); *Sefer ha-Hisoyon* (The Book of Visions), consisting of a variety of subjects; the *Oẓar ha-Shorashim* (Book of Roots); *Sefer ha-Midot* (A Book of Ethics); *Dibrē Ribot* (Polemics), on the dogmas of Judaism and question of changes in religious practices; *Imré Binah* (Words of Understanding); and the *Mishlē Asaph* and *Zemirot Asaph*, collections of proverbs and psalms. His principal editions of Mediaeval texts are those of the *More Nebukim*, Vol. I with the commentary of Solomon Maimon and Volumes II and III with his own commentary; the *Kuzari* of Halevi with his commentary; the *Mahbarot* of Immanuel of Rome; and the *Milot ha-Higoyon*, the logical treatise of Maimonides with the commentary of Mendelssohn and the editor's notes.

The *Sefer ha-Hisoyon* was written partly in Maqama style, i.e., in rhymed prose, in imitation of Al-Ḥarisi's *Tahkemoni* (Vol. I, Sec. 204), and partly in plain prose. It contains an introduction dealing with the characterization of the art of poetry, and eight portals or parts. The first three parts deal with the praise of wisdom, the value of poetry and poets, and the moral teachings of fables. The fourth part contains essays on various scientific subjects, such as on dreams, on the thickness of the crust of the earth, on the fertilization of plants, on sleep, on eclipses, on the stars, and on light and vision. The fifth part is devoted to discussions on love, friendship, justice, and peace; and the sixth and seventh parts discuss the form of the universe and theological matters; the eighth part, that of grammar and the combinations of letters. The book is thus an encyclopaedia in miniature, treating of all sciences and arts. It was admired in its time but has no permanent value.

The *Dibrē Ribot* purports to be the contents of a dispute held in ancient times in the presence of a king between a bishop and a general on the one hand, and the king's physician, a Jew, on the other hand. Jews and Judaism are, of course, the subject of discussion. At first, the dispute turns on the question as to which of the two religions, Christianity or Judaism, is the better, and the Jew is made to expostulate at length on the dogmas of his religion in the finest and most exalted manner. The character and life of the Jews form the next subject of discussion, and here, the general, a friend of the king, and the king himself, both kindly disposed towards the Jews, are made to recognize their faults and propose a series of reforms in their manner of life. They are accused of indifference to hygiene, neglect of manual labor, and above all a dislike of secular knowledge and

science, a result of their faulty system of education. A program of reform is then proposed by the king himself. The program embraces changes in the education similar to those proposed by Wessely, and it is followed by changes in the social and economic structure. The Jews, say the interlocutors, should be divided into three classes, learned men in both sacred and secular studies, including masters of liberal professions; craftsmen and merchants; and tillers of the soil. The program continues with details of regulations of the life of these three classes and other reforms. Thus, did Satanow, in his pseudographic way, express his views about the problems of Jewish life through the mouths of others. To make the book appear as of ancient date, forged letters of approbation are appended, and even the place of printing is given as Constantinople, not Berlin.

The *Imré-Binah* is an attempt to reconcile belief and philosophy in the manner of the Mediaeval Jewish thinkers, and also to draw a comparison between Kabbala and philosophy in order to show that, though their methods differ, their purposes are similar. The most important work is the *Mishlê* and *Zemirot Asaph*. Like most of his writings, these works are also pseudographic and are supposed to have emanated from the pen of an ancient singer by the name of Asaph, a name found among the composers of the Psalms. Satanow poses as the copyist of the manuscript and even provides a commentary on both the proverbs and the psalms. In the very name Asaph (אֶסָפָה) however, are contained the initials of his name, that is, Itzi* (diminutive of Yizhak) Satanow, and thus the initiated could know who the author was. The *Mishlê-Asaph* consists of three parts and the *Zemirot* forms the fourth part. The work, as a whole, is an imitation in content and style of the Biblical and Apocryphal Books of Wisdom. The proverbs intend to teach the wisdom of life and ways of conduct. They possess, however, a modern ring, for they are replete with thoughts culled from the philosophy of recent thinkers. Occasionally, we meet with flashes of thought which stimulate the mind, and a considerable number possess brilliancy of expression. Some of them deserve to be quoted. On truth and falsehood: "Truth grows out of investigation, and righteousness out of understanding; falsehood sprouts from ignorance, and iniquity blossoms forth from stupidity." On the appraisal of men: "A man is respected on entering in accordance with his apparel, but according to his intellect on

* The initials follow the Hebrew lettering אֶסָפָה, where the ס unvocalized ס can read צ .

leaving." On conduct: "Ignorance and modesty, wisdom and pride do not dwell together; the noble man causes his soul to rule his body, but the wicked, the body to rule his soul." On man: "Man is like a precious stone; he is cut and polished by morality and ornamented by wisdom." Again, "The soul of man is a polished mirror which reflects the deeds of God." On wisdom and understanding: "A shade tree is praised by its leaves, a fruit tree by its sweetness, counsellors by their advice, and knowledge by its spirit of understanding." "Water and oil do not mix, nor can a wise man be friends with a fool." "Many men in their ignorance will refuse to take pearls but will select glass beads instead; many that are dumb hear the words of others, but many who speak do not even hear the words uttered by themselves." "The human soul is like a galloping horse, but understanding is its guide." There are also a few chapters which express a connected series of thoughts, distinguished both by their loftiness and brilliancy. Such is chapter XXXV in the second part, in which a detailed comparison of the world with a beautiful and well-appointed palace is drawn; and a call is issued to the men who are guests at the palace to feast their eyes upon its beauty, to investigate its exquisite work and to admire the greatness of its builder.

The style is mainly Biblical, but at times Talmudic words and expressions are introduced. Satanow attempted to preserve the Biblical parallelism and antithesis in the structure of the sentences, and he succeeded to a large extent in the attempt. As a result, there is a certain charm pervading the style which has not lost its value even today. In its day the *Mishlê* was greatly admired both for its content and style. The *Zemirot*, or the Psalms, are much inferior to the *Mishlê*, inasmuch as they are pervaded by a spirit of artificiality and lack deep piety and religious enthusiasm. Nor, as Delitzsch remarked, do they possess the warmth of the national longing for redemption and salvation.¹⁴

Thus Satanow, with all his shortcomings, made an important contribution to modern Hebrew literature by enriching its style, by his studies in the grammar and usages of the Hebrew language, and especially by his editions of Mediaeval classics, which though faulty, still helped to foster interest in Jewish thought.

ii. Another important member of the *Measef-group* was Judah Leib Ben-Zeeb (1764-1811). Like Satanow, he was born in Poland and

¹⁴ *Zur Geschichte der jüdischen Poesie*, p. 118.

spent his youth there; but, in the year 1787, when he began to devote himself to secular studies, he went to Berlin to enter the circle of the enlightened to which his participation in the *Measef* served as an introduction. He, however, did not stay long in Berlin and returned to his home in Cracow where he spent a few years, but owing to his persecution by the Ḥassidic faction for his liberal opinions, he left again to settle at Breslau, where he occupied himself as a corrector in a Hebrew printing house. He ultimately moved to Vienna, where he was employed until his death in the famous printing establishment of Anton Schmid in the same capacity. During all this time, he worked assiduously in several literary fields and published many works of which he was not only the author but, as was customary in those days, the salesman.

Ben-Zeeb, like most of the writers of his day, was versatile in his literary activity and made notable contributions to the fields of grammar, lexicography, Bible exegesis, and translation. His important works are the *Talmud Leshon Eber*; the *Oẓar ha-Shorashim* (The Thesaurus of Hebrew Roots), the *Mebo le-Mikraē-Kodesh* (An Introduction to the Holy Scriptures); and the translation of the Wisdom of Ben Sira. The *Talmud Leshon Eber*, is one of the most complete Hebrew grammars published in modern times, for it treats not only of etymology, as most of the Hebrew grammars did, but also of syntax and includes several chapters on the accents and on the rules of prosody. It differs from the many grammars of the Middle Ages in its simple method and fine arrangement. Ben-Zeeb utilized all the contributions in the field of Hebrew philology made by the great Gentile scholars in the eighteenth century and adapted them to the needs of the students. The book enjoyed great popularity, and it was for more than half a century the standard Hebrew grammar from which generations of Maskilim gained their grammatical knowledge.

The *Lexicon* originally contained three parts, two of which explain all the Hebrew words of the Bible, arranged according to the roots, and the third was a Hebrew-German dictionary. It was subsequently reprinted in a number of editions with many improvements. The latest and most complete is that of Schulbaum (1880), who added all the Aramaic words contained in the Bible as well as a large number of the post-Biblical words. To the Hebrew-German dictionary, he joined also a German-Hebrew part. The *Lexicon* was used by

thousands of youths of Russia and Poland both for the study of the Hebrew language and as a text for the study of German.

Ben-Zeeb's translation of the *Wisdom of Ben Sira* into Hebrew is a masterpiece of style. It displays the great skill of the translator, who succeeded in choosing the necessary words and expressions as the proper medium for conveying the wisdom of life contained in this most important book of the Apocrypha. He entered into the spirit of the book with such zeal that many times he actually divined the very Hebrew expressions used by the author himself, although the Hebrew text was not extant in his day. When a large part of that text was later recovered through the efforts of the late Dr. Schechter, it was found that many of Ben-Zeeb's renderings of verses were reproductions of the text.

He engaged also in the editing of Mediaeval texts and published Saadia's *Emunot we-Deot* with his own commentary and copious notes. As his colleagues, Ben-Zeeb engaged in the writing of poetry, distinguishing himself especially in the field of the *Mashal* (The Fable), but neither poetry nor fable-writing were his strong points, for he lacked a genuine poetic spirit. It can be said of him that he pursued the muses, but was never pursued by them.

iii. A leading member of the group was Joel Bril (1760-1802), a professor at a gymnasium in Breslau. He was one of the principal contributors of the *Measef* during its first period of publication, and later, in the years 1788 to 1790 he became its editor. His literary activity expressed itself in Biblical exegesis and writing of fables. He contributed to the new Bible edition with German translation initiated by Mendelssohn and continued after his death the commentaries on the Psalms and on the Book of Jonah together with an introduction to the first book. His fables have never been collected, but they are found in the volumes of the *Measef* in large numbers. Most of them are written in prose, but some in verse. They are, as all fables, didactic in nature; a number, though have a satirical ring to them, and are thus the forerunners of Hebrew satire. In addition, he wrote poems from time to time, but as most of the writers of this group, poetry to him was more a duty than an art.

iv. Baruch Lindau (1759-1849) was the scientist of the group. He carried out the main purpose of the Haskalah movement, which was to instruct the Jews in secular studies in order to widen their horizon of the world and life. He began his work by publishing in the

Measef popular articles on scientific subjects. These articles, with much added material, were later published as a book called *Reshit Limmudim* (Elements of Study). It is divided in two parts, the first of which, containing eleven chapters, is encyclopaedic in character. It deals with astronomy, physical and political geography, botany, zoology, and human physiology and anatomy. The subjects are, of course, discussed in a popular and elementary way, and the work is not entirely free of errors, yet it contains much information.

The second part, divided into five chapters, is devoted to a single science, that of physics. It is a detailed exposition of several phases of that science, namely, the nature of bodies, of motion, of statics, and of hydrostatics. In discussing such a difficult subject as physics in a language which was not as yet adapted for this purpose, Lindau performed a great service to the development of modern Hebrew. His style is lucid, terse, and quite appropriate to the subject. He was, of course, forced to coin some new words in order to establish a scientific terminology in Hebrew, and thus facilitated the use of that language. The book is accompanied by a number of drawings and illustrations. In its time, the work was popular, for it opened the portals of science to thousands who knew only Hebrew, and it saw several editions.

v. Of the lesser lights of this group, we should mention Isaac Eichel, Wolf Dessau (1751-1784), and Aaron Halle-Wolfsohn (1756-1835). The first, Eichel, was one of the authors of the prospectus of the *Measef* and its editor for the first three years. His literary productivity was limited to lexicography and Bible exegesis. He contributed a number of articles to the *Measef* on these subjects, displaying a fine sense of language in his discernment between shades of meaning in a number of Hebrew words and expressions. He also wrote the commentary on the Book of Proverbs in the edition of the Bible with German translation.

The second, Dessau, was both a religious philosopher and a Bible exegete. He contributed a number of essays to the *Measef* dealing with philosophical-theological subjects, and composed a book entitled *Grundsätze der jüdischen Religion* (The Fundamental Principles of the Jewish Religion). As an exegete, he wrote the *Pēsher Dabar* (The Explanation of the Subject), a commentary on the Book of Job and also commentaries on the Books of Obadiah, Micah, and Zephaniah.

The third, Halle-Wolfsohn, was one of the editors of the *Measef* during the years it was published in Berlin (1787-90), and he con-

tributed frequently to it during the first period of its existence. He wrote essays on Hebrew grammar and on religious questions, and a considerable number of didactic fables and parables. His parables, unlike those of his friend Bril, were written mostly in rhyme, and he, of course, also cultivated the Muses. In his zeal to spread the knowledge of Hebrew, he composed a text-book, entitled *Abtalion*, for teaching the language to the young.

20. JOSEPH EPHRATI

One who was closely allied to the *Measef-group* of writers, inasmuch as he contributed occasionally to that journal, but who had made a distinct enough contribution to modern Hebrew literature to be raised above the level of that group, was Joseph Ephrati of Tropolowitz (1770-1804). We know very little of his life, except that he lived in the small town of Tropolowitz in Prussian Silesia, that he later was engaged as a teacher in Ratibor, a city in upper Silesia, and that still later he lived in Prague. His field of literary activity was poetry. He published a number of poems in the *Measef*, and was about to issue a book of poems, but was prevented from carrying out his purpose by his early death. We do possess, however, two long poems from his pen, one an elegy on the death of Emperor Leopold II, and the other an elegy on the death of Rabbi Ezekiel Landau. In the latter elegy, he makes Landau embrace his former opponent, Moses Mendelssohn, the apostle of the Haskalah, before entering the portals of Paradise, thus telling us that in the other world things are seen in their true light, and false opinions, the cause of strife between two great spirits, vanish.

His fame, though, rests primarily on his drama, *Melukhat Shaul* (The Reign of Saul). To Ephrati belongs the honor of having written the first original long historical drama in Hebrew. The dramas of Luzzatto are, as we have seen, mainly allegorical, and the drama of Franco-Mendes (see below) only an imitation; but the *Melukhat Shaul* is an original historical dramatic work of high value. The subject of the drama is the reign of the first king of Israel, and the hero is the tragic king Saul, whose hopes and aspirations for establishing a permanent rule in Israel were nipped in the bud immediately after his victorious campaign against the Amalekites. The drama contains six acts, which are not divided into well-defined scenes, but the action is constantly shifting into different phases. It follows closely the story of the Bible, with slight deviations, from the time

of Saul's return from the war with Amalek to his tragic death in the field of battle at the foot of the mountains of Gilboa.

The first act introduces Saul after his return from the victorious campaign, who, in spite of his triumph, is disturbed in mind. A kind of premonition tells him that this victory is his last. His son Jonathan and his general Abner attempt to raise his fallen spirits, but then the catastrophe occurs. The seer Samuel meets the king, and announces the fatal verdict of God that Saul's kingship will terminate with him for his disobedience in not totally annihilating the Amalekites. As a result of the dire prophecy, Saul is attacked by occasional fits of madness, and his friends counsel him to invite a flute-player to dispel his sorrow with sweet melodies; and Jonathan is dispatched to bring David.

The second act describes the meeting of Jonathan and David, their entering into a bond of eternal friendship, the melancholy brooding of Saul over his impending fate, the coming of David into the palace, his interview with the king, and finally the incipient love of the princess Miḳal for David. In the third act, the episode of the war with the Philistines and the signal victory of David over Goliath are depicted. The fourth act contains the crux of the tragedy. Saul's jealousy and melancholy reach their climax. He feels the bitter sting of the song of the women who acclaim David as hero because he smote the Philistines in myriads, while to him they assign only thousands. He sees the writing of the hand on the wall which declares the end of Saul and the rise of David. David becomes henceforth the nightmare of his ravings. The noble soul of the king is degraded and he plots to kill his own son-in-law. In the fifth act, there pass before us the various attempts made by Saul to capture David. The final act is devoted to the depicting of the fatal battle with the Philistines at Gilboa, where both Saul and Jonathan fall. Here the dramatist deviates from the Biblical story and makes David appear on the battle-field to meet Saul in his dying moments, and the latter apologizes to him for all the wrongs he had done him. Saul even begs David to take back Miḳal from Paltiel ben Laish, her second husband; in the Bible, Miḳal is returned to David by the command of Ish Boshet, the son of Saul, who succeeds to the throne. The deviation is a very touching episode and heightens the effect of the drama.

The character of the hero is drawn with psychological insight, and the tragedy of the first king of Israel, whose hopes are dashed to the

ground by the decree of a mighty power, is the center of the drama. We see him seized by insanity, and we hear him proclaim in his anguish his wish to have all of creation destroyed, exclaiming thus:

How the whole creation rolls round about me;
Let it sink into the bottomless abyss,
Let its fabric vanish, let its loom be wrenched,
Only utter ruin can efface all wrong.¹⁵

We are deeply affected by the degradation of a noble soul which, distorted by jealousy, struggles feebly against spilling innocent blood. In his fleeting lucid moments, Saul shudders at his own desire to kill David, but his scruples are easily put to rest by the glib tongue of Doeg the Edomite, who inflames his anger, and Saul resolves upon the deed.

Well drawn are also the other characters, those of David, Jonathan, and especially of Miḳal. Her love for David is artistically depicted. Ephrati is, of course, influenced by the ideas of his time. The love between Jonathan and David is made the vehicle of humanitarian views, and the equality of all men, whether princes or shepherds, is emphasized. We also meet here with fine, though brief, descriptions of nature of which the following, depicting the universe, is an illustration:

Here under Heaven's vault behold
The beauty of the form of God
And marvel at the scene unrolled
Before your eyes, oh, Creature of the Sod,—
The twinkling lamps that sparkle in the sky,
So joyous to the soul and pleasing to the eye.¹⁶

Besides the deviations from the Biblical story mentioned, the writer elaborates other episodes which are only referred to in the Bible in a few words. Thus David's visit to Samuel after his escape from Saul is here expanded into a very touching scene. On the other hand, he omitted some Biblical episodes which could have been elaborated into effective scenes. Thus, the story of the anointing of David by the aged seer Samuel is left out, nor are the effects of this event upon David noted in the drama. Another defect is quite

¹⁵ Mel. Shaul, Ed. Levinson, p. 51. Trans. taken from J. L. Landau's "Short Lectures on Modern Hebrew Literature," p. 85.

¹⁶ Ibid, p. 8.

evident in the picture of the character of Saul. He is too submissive to the decree of God, and does not rebel against it. The sin of Saul consisted in showing pity to the king of the Amalekites and in taking booty of cattle, a rather trifling offense as compared with the severe punishment meted out. Rebellion would only be human and would heighten the action. The style of Ephrati is exquisite, mostly Biblical but frequently tinged with Talmudic words and expressions. The meter and rhyme are those of Wessely whenever they are employed. The larger part of the drama is written in rhyme. Alliteration and other devices are also used in order to give the drama a rhythmic swing.

The *Melukat Shaul* was published by the author in 1794, and it was for a time forgotten, but interest was revived in it thirty years later. In 1820, Isaac Baer Levinsohn issued a second edition, and since then ten more editions have been issued, the latest in 1888. There was also a Yiddish translation made of it in 1801, in the lifetime of the author, which went through eight editions. We are told that the Yiddish version used to be played on the stage in Galician cities by amateur actors.

21. WRITERS AND POETS OF HOLLAND, FRANCE, AND ITALY

We have hitherto discussed the development of the Haskalah literature in Germany where the movement first took root and produced a strong literary current. This current, however, had some tributaries which originated in countries outside of Germany and its sphere of influence, namely, the lands of Eastern Europe. These tributaries came from lands which in days gone by were rich in Jewish culture and were once great centers of learning; but owing to the change of the times, declined and ceased to produce. The spirit of enlightenment, which moved the Jewries of central Europe, stirred up some movement also in countries of Western Europe, in Holland, France, and Italy, and here and there, men arose who contributed their share to the new literature.

i. The first of these was David Franco-Mendes (1713-1792) of Amsterdam. Mendes was a business man in private life, but possessed a wide education, being conversant with several European languages and a master of Hebrew. He was a disciple of Moses Hayyim Luzatto during the latter's residence in Amsterdam and through his influence was inspired to devote himself to Hebrew poetry. He par-

ticipated in the *Measef* and published there many poems and biographies of some Sephardic Jews, such as Menasseh ben Israel, Orobio de Castro, and others. His main contribution, however, was the drama he composed, entitled *Gemul Athaliah* (The Punishment of Athaliah).

It is not an entirely original production, but really an elaboration of two dramas, *Athalie*, written in French by Racine, and *Gioas ré di Giuda* (Joash, King of Judah) by Pietro Metastasio in Italian, parts of which Mendes combined into one. The subject is the story told in 2 Kings Ch. XI of Athaliah, the queen mother of Aḥaziah, who seized the throne after the death of her son and killed all the royal princes except Joash, who was hidden in the temple by his aunt, and of the ultimate revolt against the usurper, her death, and the crowning of the young prince. As stated, Mendes did not merely translate the drama, but elaborated it according to the models and it is therefore a work by Mendes. It is divided into three acts, which are subdivided into scenes. The first scene of Act I describes the high priest, Jehoiada, revealing the secret of the escape of Joash to his confederate priest, Ebiathar; the second depicts a scene in Athaliah's palace in which her ladies-in-waiting and the priests of Baal attempt to raise the fallen spirits of the queen; and the third draws a picture of the Temple worship as described by the priest Zechariah to the prince Joash. The second act consists likewise of three scenes: the first takes place in the garden of the palace where Athaliah and the chief priest of Baal, Matan, hold conversation. The queen, having a premonition that all is not well in the state, delivers herself of a monologue in which she expresses her fears of an impending misfortune. The priest attempts to allay her fears and encourages her. In the second and third scenes Zechariah informs Joash of the impending event while Jehoiada reveals to the assembly of judges and the leaders of the people that prince Joash is alive and ready for his coronation by them. The third act brings us to the climax, the rebellion of Jehoiada and the death of Athaliah.

The drama is merely an elaboration upon the story of the Bible and the central figure is the traitress Athaliah. Her character is well drawn, though rather sketchily. There is not much psychological insight, but some traits of that turbulent soul are skillfully emphasized. These are contained in a fine monologue by Athaliah, given in the first scene of the second act, where the queen pictures her feelings of remorse over her bloody acts and visualizes before us the

nightmare in which she sees the young princes begging for their lives and hears the mysterious voice pronouncing her doom. The style of Mendes is Biblical, but not purely so, for he also employs Talmudic words and even expressions from Mediaeval writers. His meter is that of Luzzatto, two vowels and a *Yated* and three vowels for the short line, and two vowels and a *Yated* and seven vowels for the long line.

Mendes also translated another drama from the Italian by Metastasio, called *Betulia Liberata* (Betulia is Freed), wherein the story of Judith is dramatized. Mendes named it *Teshuat Yisrael* (The Salvation of Israel), and in the translation he adopted Wessely's meter of vowels, breaking away entirely from the Spanish-Arabic meter. He also left after him in manuscript a collection of poems under the name of *Kinor David* (The Harp of David), some of which were later published; but in none of these poems does he rise to poetic heights. His great service consisted in composing a historical drama, which though not entirely original, yet was sufficiently stamped with his spirit to be called after him.

ii. Italy, the land of song and poetry, also produced at the beginning of the period a secular poet of high quality, Ephraim Luzzatto (1729-1792). Unlike his great namesake, Moses Ḥayyim Luzzatto, he was far from mysticism and rigorous piety, but he was thoroughly saturated with the light attitude towards life prevalent at the time in the Italian literature, though he was at the same time a devoted Jew and permeated with a deep national spirit.

Luzzatto was born in San Daniele, Northern Italy, and studied medicine in Padua. On graduating from the university, he practiced his profession first at Padua and then in other Italian cities. In the year 1763, he moved to London, where he was engaged for thirty years as an attending physician at the hospital of the Portuguese Jewish community. There he published, in 1768, his collection of poems entitled *Ēle Benē ha-Ne'urim* (These are the Children of Youth). The name indicates that the poems in the book are the spiritual children of Ephraim. He left in manuscript many more poems, practically a box-full, but the one who came into possession of his effects, not understanding their value, burned them.

As a poet, Luzzatto resembles Immanuel in many respects, in his attitude towards life and in the subjects of his poems, but being a modern man he does not devote much energy to a play upon words and puns. He sings freely and lightly because he has an urge to

sing. His subjects are wedding poems, friendship poems, elegies, religious odes, love ditties, and satires. There are only four poems written on the power of love or its glorification, but in reality all his wedding poems are love songs, and consequently love forms one of the principal themes of Luzzatto's poetry. He has an eye for beauty and is enraptured by it. He is attracted not only by the beauty of the human body but also by the beauty of nature, for though there are no special nature poems in Luzzatto's collection, there are many passages of nature description in his poems. The chief characteristic of Luzzatto's poetry is its lightness and naturalness. Any event, no matter how trivial, forms a subject for a poem. Thus, the birth of a son in the family of a friend after three daughters had preceded him forms the theme of one of Ephraim's most delightful poems. In general, Luzzatto views things in a playful mood. Love to him is not a deep soul-stirring emotion, but a thing to be enjoyed, and life itself is treated by him in a similar vein. Only once does he pause to contemplate its seriousness and tragic aspect, and as a result we have a short but stirring poem, entitled *Keẓ Kol Basar* (The End of All Flesh), in which the poet bewails the vanity and shortness of human life. He advises man, like all didactic poets, to rise to spiritual heights and cease pursuing worldly pleasures which are only fleeting.

Luzzatto was not a pious man. In fact he was accused in London of levity in religious matters. Yet, he possessed a deep religious strain, and we have several poems in which he begs God for forgiveness for his sins with great fervor and emotion. Very stirring are his national songs. He is both, using Halevi's metaphor, "a jackal for wailing at the desolation of Zion and a harp for singing of its restoration." These songs are few in number but rich in quality. He is also biting in his satire, and the objects of his sting are his colleagues, the physicians. He mocks at their ignorance, accusing them of immodesty and evil passions.

Most of the poems are written in sonnet form, consisting of two quatrains and two tercets. The meter is mostly the one of vowels, but at times he uses also the Spanish-Arabic one; and one poem consists entirely of *Yatedim*, i.e., of a *sheva* mobile and one vowel. The dexterous use of all forms of Hebrew meter proves Luzzatto's skill in the mastery of the language, for, in spite of artificialities, the poems are all light and pleasant.

iii. Samuel Romanelli (1757-1814), poet, scholar, and traveler, who, like Luzzatto, hailed from Italy, is another noted literary figure of

the epoch. He was born in Mantua, Italy, but left the country early in life, as he was of a tempestuous nature and could not reside long in one place. We find him, therefore, wandering in many countries. He visited France and England; from there he went to Gibraltar and Morocco, where he spent four years; and later he stayed for some time in Germany where he became associated with a group of the "enlightened." In 1793, he was called to Vienna by Anton Schmid, the famous printer, to occupy the position of corrector and proof-reader. After five years, he left Vienna to begin his wanderings again, but ultimately he returned to his native country to settle in Alessandria, Northern Italy, where he stayed until his death.

And just as checkered as his life was, so was his literary activity. He mastered many languages, but he wrote chiefly in Hebrew and occasionally in Italian. His Hebrew writings are numerous and various. He composed several Hebrew grammars, one with an Italian translation; translated Gabirol's poem *Keter Malkut* (The Royal Crown) into Italian; wrote a number of dramas and numerous poems; and finally wrote a very popular and interesting book of travels, entitled *Masa' be-Arab* (The Burden of the Jews in the Arabic Countries), which pictures the life of the Jews in North Africa and especially in Morocco. Of all his numerous works, however, those that have permanent literary value are his drama, *ha-Kolot Yehdolun* (The Voices of Strife Ceased), and the book of travels.

The drama was composed, as many previous plays, on the occasion of the wedding of the daughter of Daniel Jaffe Itzig, the rich leader of the Berlin Jewish community, to Mendel Oppenheim, and it was intended as a wedding gift to the couple. It is of an allegoric nature, and the characters are personifications of human qualities. The dramatis personae are: *Zedek* (Righteousness), *Hosen* (Constancy), his friend, and *Tiferet* (Glory), the friend of both; *Nogah* (Venus), *Heshek* (Cupid), her son, and *'Osher* (Fortune), their friend; and finally, *Tikvah* (Hope), the friend of all, and *Shalom* (Peace). Venus and Cupid, though borrowed from Greek mythology, are here employed as symbols of beauty and love. The plot is as follows: Venus, though flattered and loved by many, is displeased because Righteousness does not love her. She feels that she is surrounded by a crowd of men of low calibre and she aspires to the love of noblemen. Cupid, her son, admonishes her to be content with her lot. Righteousness, on the other hand, is likewise displeased because his followers are

few. He also aspires to add Venus to his train. He is comforted by Glory, who points out that, though the numbers of those that seek him are small, they brave all hazards to come near him. Fortune, the enemy of Righteousness, plots against him and even turns Venus and her son into enemies. Constancy comes to the aid of Righteousness, and ultimately war breaks out with Venus, Cupid, and Fortune on one side, and Righteousness, Constancy, and their followers on the other side. In the midst of the war, Peace appears, calls for cessation of strife, and points out that all have their place in the world; Righteousness must have an alliance with Beauty (Venus), and Fortune must be a friend of both. Love (Cupid), of course, occupies an important place in the world; Constancy must give strength to Righteousness, and Glory should be his reward. The conclusion is that in the uniting of these two families of Oppenheim and Itzig by the marriage of Henrietta and Mendel, the entire plan of peace is realized.

The elaboration of the plot is carried out skillfully in three acts, subdivided into scenes which consist, as in most allegorical dramas, mainly of monologues or dialogues with little action. There is also a number of arias, i.e., short songs, which are related in their content to the monologues. This device was borrowed by Romanelli from the eighteenth century Italian drama. The style is euphuistic and difficult; the meter is that of Wessely, the measured number of vowels.

Romanelli's book of travel possesses great literary merit; it was popular in the time of the author, and even for several generations after his death. It saw a number of editions, one even appearing as late as 1926. Its qualities consist in a true and vivid description of the life of both the Jews and the Berbers in Morocco, interspersed with many personal incidents of gripping interest, a tinge of humor, and flashes of philosophic thought. In the book, we note the observant eye of the author, who notes all details of the colorful life passing before him, which he describes both objectively and with sympathy. As an educated European, he is, of course, disgusted with the mode of life and manners of the Mohammedans and the Jews, with their poverty, barbarism, superstitions, and general lack of civilization; yet he is not insensible to the good qualities of the Jews which shine out from beneath their poverty. In the story is also reflected the character of the writer, his versatility, his light-mindedness, and his ingeniousness in escaping from tight places by various devices. On his

travels he acted as interpreter, correspondent, teacher, preacher, and business agent. On the whole, the book reads like a novel, for the incidents, related in a vivid style, and the descriptions are complete and even artistic.

iv. The current of the Haskalah created some eddies even in France, where, on the whole, there were very few Jews at the time, except in Alsace and Lorraine. It was among these Jews that there arose a few Hebrew writers. The first was Moses Ensheim from Metz (1760-1840). He sojourned for a time in Berlin, where he was engaged as a teacher in the home of Moses Mendelssohn, but later he returned to his native city. He wrote a number of poems, among them an ode in honor of the first anniversary of the establishment of the Republic of France entitled *Shir le-Moshe* (The Ode of Moses).

The second one was Lippman Moses Büschenthal (1784-1818). He wrote both in German and Hebrew. His Hebrew writings, however, are few and consist of several poems in honor of Napoleon and one in honor of David Sinzheim, the president of the Sanhedrin convened by the former. According to reports, he left in manuscript some philosophical works in Hebrew, but they have never been published.

The third, whose contribution to literature is of a more permanent and lasting value, was Elijah Halfan ha-Levi (1760-1826). He was born in Germany, but settled early in life in Paris, where he became cantor of the leading synagogue. During his residence in Paris, he studied many languages, but he always cherished his love for Hebrew, to which he was devoted from his youth. He wrote a number of poems and composed a religious and ethical manual, entitled *Lim-mudē Dat-u-Musar*. He also left in manuscript a Hebrew-French dictionary and a study of Aesop's Fables. His fame, however, rests on one long poem, which he wrote in 1810, in honor of the Peace of Luneville concluded between Napoleon and the allies, named *ha-Shalom* (The Peace).

It is an ode written in the pseudo-classic style but with much pathos and great poetic skill. In the classic manner, he opens his poem with an invocation to the muses for inspiration, and then turns to David, the sweet singer of Israel, with a request to lend him his lyre that he may sing of the great events. The poet tells of the Reign of Terror in France, the wars with the allies, the rise of Napoleon, and then of the peace. In his description of the Reign of Terror, Halfan is both soul-gripping and elevating. He sings thus:

Would you desire to know those bitter days?
 Then walk alone, my friend, among the tombs and raise
 Your eyes to heavens without light
 And fields robbed of their color by the night;
 Where howls the jackal in the lonely wood
 And wails monotonously the owl beneath a hood
 Of withered leaves, from which all life has fled,
 And where, below, the grass and herbs are dead;
 When sullen sky frowns at the murky waves
 And creeping things moan in their stagnant graves;
 When the North Wind in the pine top grieves
 And rustling leaf is as the voice of thieves
 And sounds of crawling things appear instead
 To be the muffled foot-beats of the dead.

If in this terror of each sound and sight,
 Your spirit staggers, drunk and dazed with fright
 As though with wine, and terror, like a blight,
 Turns all Creation into chaos, black as night,
 Then say—"These were the days of suffering for France."

Very strong is also his picture of the exploits of Napoleon, and Halfan's characterization of him is one of the best of numerous heroic poems written at the time. Halfan is equally masterful in depicting the boon of peace and the terror of war and strife. He concludes his poem with an idyllic and alluring picture of the days of peace which will follow the treaty.

The talents of the father, both as a musician and a poet, attained their perfection in the sons, Jacques Fromental ha-Levi, the composer of the opera *La-Juive*, and Leon ha-Levi, the dramatist and novelist.

B. SECOND EPOCH

22. THE AUSTRIAN CENTER OF HASKALAH

In the history of a literature of a people, such as the Jews, who are not only scattered in different lands subject to the influences of changed environments, but whose members, especially those of the intellectual classes, are prone to wander from one country to another, it is difficult to fix with any amount of definiteness the periods or even epochs in the development of that literature. There is always an overlapping from one epoch into another, a mixture of currents. The wandering writers carry the aims and motives of a movement

from one country into another, and though the character of the movement is undoubtedly changed, owing to the influence of the different environment in which it is situated, still it retains for a long time a certain similarity to the original type from which it sprang. Yet the difference between the two movements are of sufficient importance to entitle us to distinguish between them by the term "epoch" and to name the earliest movement the first epoch and the somewhat later one, the second.

Judged by what was said, the activity of the writers, poets, and scholars, which will be described below, taken as a whole, can be distinguished as the second epoch of the first Haskalah period. The term "epoch," however, should not be construed strictly as a further step in time, though that is not excluded, for many of the writers were contemporaneous with those of the first epoch, but primarily as a general term indicating a number of changes in the nature and process of the development of the movement. One of the important changes, though seemingly an external one, was the removal of the center of the Haskalah and its activity from Germany, or rather Prussia, to the Austrian Empire.

The change of center brought about a transformation in the character of the Haskalah. Not only did the Austrian Empire contain sections in which the Jewish population was dense and compact, such as Galicia and Hungary, but these masses of Jews lived a complete Jewish life and were not as yet affected by the spirit of assimilation and internal disruption which raged in Germany. Moreover, Jewish learning and scholarship was not as scarce as in Germany. Almost every Jew in Galicia, and to a great extent even in Hungary, was acquainted with the Bible, at least with the Pentateuch; a large part of the Jewish population was versed in the Talmud; a considerable number even knew post-Talmudic literature, such as the Codes, and Responsa; and there were frequently men who delved into religious philosophy. The Hassidic element popularized the teachings of mysticism, and various books on ethics and Kabbala were spread among the masses. Hebrew was still the literary language, for whatever literature was produced was written in it. True, the conditions described here applied primarily to Galicia and to a somewhat lesser extent to Hungary. But even the other provinces of Austria, especially Bohemia and Moravia, were not as bereft of Jewish learning as the lands of Germany. There was a sufficient sprinkling of scholarship among the Jews of these countries, and the tempo of assimilation

among them was much slower than among their brethren in Germany.

On the other hand, in Austria, the movement of enlightenment was supported by the government. This most absolute government of Central Europe had evinced from the time of the issuance of the Edict of Toleration a kind of paternal interest in the Jews and insisted upon their enlightenment, endeavoring to "civilize" and force the European culture upon them. Thus, Emperor Francis I issued a decree in the year 1820, ordering that after a stated time only those rabbis should act as such who could prove their mastery of philosophic studies besides the teachings of Judaism; that prayers and sermons must be recited and delivered in German or in any other tongues of the Empire, such as Polish, Hungarian, etc.; and that, except for religious instruction which the Jews may give to their children in the Hebrew schools, all Jewish children must attend Christian schools. The laws were never carried out, but the tendency of the government to destroy the national character and the completeness of Jewish life was clear. Such an attitude aroused a revulsion among the Jewish masses, especially in Galicia, where piety and the feeling of separatism were intense. This opposition was strengthened by the fact that some of the Maskilim advised the government to use strong measures in forcing enlightenment upon the Jews, and it was especially obdurate in the beginning of the second period of the Haskalah, in the late twenties and the thirties of the last century, bringing about a war between the Maskilim and their opponents.

During the two decades however, which may be called the second epoch of the first period, the war was not intense, for the center of Haskalah was not Galicia, but other parts of the Empire, such as Bohemia and Vienna, where traditional Judaism, though still strong, was already tinged with the European spirit and Jews were not averse to secular culture. The leaders of the movement mostly hailed from these countries, but Poland and Galicia contributed their share of writers.

This changed environment left its stamp upon the literature of the epoch. It was still a literature of enlightenment, but its writers and leaders were more confident of their success. Unlike their brethren in Germany in the earlier epoch, who felt, as year after year passed, that their labors were in vain and that their cause was lost, these Austrian Maskilim felt that they were laboring for the benefit of large masses of Jews to whom Hebrew was the only literary language.

This confidence strengthened their hands and encouraged them to exert their efforts in building up a literature which should be of permanent value. Besides, the writers of this epoch lived in a Jewish environment and were saturated with Jewish learning, and their interests were, therefore, varied and more embracing. They were interested not only in the Bible and in the revival of the Hebrew language, but in the Talmud, history, and philosophy. Their purpose was, of course, like their German predecessors, to teach and enlighten the people, to widen their horizon by giving them information on matters of science and knowledge of the world; but they wanted more, and that was to create something original in various fields, briefly, to increase the spiritual wealth of their people.

As a result, we see that while translations from the German and other languages still abound, there appear a considerable number of original works in various fields. Again, while poetry is still predominant, prose writings increase, the language becomes more pliable and elastic, and the literature becomes ramified and varied. In short, the writers of this period, who lived among their people in a place where Jewish life was vibrant and buoyant, laid the foundations of a literary activity which was destined, with the beginning of the following period, to construct the edifice of a complete Hebrew literature. We shall now turn to survey this activity as manifested in the works of the leading writers of this epoch of Haskalah.¹⁷

i. A powerful factor in the spread of enlightenment and knowledge among the Jewish masses of the Austrian empire was Menaḥem Mendel Lefin or Lewin (1749-1826). He was born at Satanow, the little town in Podolia which produced several Hebrew writers. He was educated in the Heder and Yeshibah, but early in life he chanced to read the *Elim* by Joseph Solomon del Medigo (Vol. II, Sec. 101), and this book, which deals with mathematics and physics, aroused in him a desire to study these sciences and he thus entered upon the path of Haskalah.

In the year 1770, he came to Berlin to seek a cure for his weak eyes and remained there for three years. He then entered the circle of the enlightened and made the acquaintance of Mendelssohn. The latter, recognizing Lefin's talent for popularizing scientific subjects, advised him to translate into Hebrew a famous popular book on medicine by the Swiss philosopher Tissot. Lefin followed the advice,

¹⁷ For the endeavors of Herz Homberg to spread enlightenment among the Jews of Galicia, see above, sec. 15.

and henceforth he devoted himself to the task of instructing his brethren in scientific and ethical matters. During his stay in Berlin, he succeeded in acquiring a wide knowledge of mathematics, natural sciences, and philosophy, and in mastering several European languages. All this erudition he employed for the benefit of his people.

At the end of his stay at Berlin, Lefin returned to his native land and settled in the town of Mikolaew. There, his wife opened a little store which gave but a poor living for the family, while the husband continued his studies. The lord of the town, the Prince Czartoryski, one of the grandees of the kingdom of Poland, happened to enter that little store and found on the counter a German book, the *Mathematica* by the philosopher Wolfe. He made the acquaintance of Menahem, and a strange friendship was struck up between the proud Prince and the poor Maskil. The former even engaged him as the tutor of his son in mathematics and philosophy. Czartoryski bestowed favors upon Lefin from time to time and helped him in the publication of his Hebrew books.

For a time, Lefin sojourned in Warsaw where, encouraged by the Prince Czartoryski, he published a brochure in French, in which he proposed a plan for the improvement of the situation of the Jews. The brochure is entitled *Essai d'un plan de reforme, avant pour objet d'éclairer la Nation Juive en Pologne et de la redresser par ses moeurs* (An Essay upon a Plan of Reform with the Object to Enlighten the Jewish Nation in Poland and to Improve it in Accordance with its Customs). It is written in legal style, containing one hundred and six paragraphs. After sketching the development of the Jewish religion from the Bible through the Talmud to the Codes, the author proposes changes in the system of Jewish education. He advises the establishment of schools where the Bible should be taught by the help of a Polish translation, together with a certain amount of secular studies. He further advises a reorganization of the Rabbinate, with a number of district rabbis who, besides their Talmudic learning, should also possess a secular education, and similar reforms in accordance with the spirit of the enlightenment of the day.

From Warsaw Lefin went for a time to Ustje, the estate of the wealthy Maecenas of that day, Joshua Zeitlin (Sec. 12), where under the patronage of that illustrious person, a number of scholars and writers congregated. There he made the acquaintance of Abraham Perez, the son-in-law of Zeitlin, who engaged him as instructor for his son, taking him to St. Petersburg, whither Perez had moved.

Ultimately, however, Lefin settled in Galicia, where from 1808 until his death, he lived alternately in Brody and Tarnopol and associated with the scholars and writers of these cities.

Lefin's contribution to Hebrew literature is important. Its importance, though, consists not in the originality of the contents of his works, for they were all translations or elaborations of works in other languages, but in the originality of the style. He contributed mainly to the development of Hebrew prose. His works consist of (1) *Iggrot ha-Hokmah* (Letters on Wisdom), containing seven letters which deal with the elements of various sciences; (2) *Refuot ha-Am* (Medicine for the People), a translation of Tissot's Manual of Popular Medicine and Hygiene; (3) *Heshbon ha-Nefesh* (The Examination of the Soul), a treatise upon practical ethics and right conduct of life, an elaboration of Benjamin Franklin's Poor Richard's Almanac; (4) *Masa'ot ha-Yam* (Sea Voyages), a description of two journeys on the Arctic and Antarctic seas, culled from descriptions in other languages; (5) a new translation of the *More Nebukim* of Maimonides in easy and popular Mishnaic style, of which only the first part appeared; (6) *Alon More* (The Tree of the Master), an introduction to the philosophy of Maimonides, the only original work of Lefin. Yet the services of Menaḥem to the Haskalah were great, for not only did he really spread knowledge among the Hebrew-reading masses, but his method of popularization and the delightful prose style which he developed later found many imitators and made possible further progress in that direction. Lefin was the first to explore the linguistic treasures of the Mishnaic and Midrashic books and to utilize their style for the imparting of information in a clear and lucid manner. He abandoned the euphuistic Biblical style of the writers of his day and chose the lighter style of the Agada. As our author dealt with subjects which hitherto were not written upon in Hebrew, he was forced from time to time to coin new words and expressions, many of which were accepted in literature. By his translation of the *Guide* of Maimonides, our author aimed to make the contents of that famous work more palatable to the intelligent masses, who could hardly digest it in the stiff and formal style of the Tibbon translation. He succeeded to a degree but not entirely. What had happened to Al-Harisi, when he made a similar attempt, happened to Lefin's translation. Ibn Tibbon's translation is undoubtedly hard and heavy, but it is exact, weighty, and dignified. Consequently, all other translations were

forgotten while Tibbon's remained the standard one. Lefin reached the height of his mastery of style in the *Heshbon ha-Nefesh*. It is lucid, rich, and varied, and reads like an original work. The works of our author were very popular. They received the approbation of the rabbis and orthodox leaders, and were sold in thousands of copies. We are told that the *Heshbon ha-Nefesh* exerted such influence upon the readers, that in Galicia and Podolia societies of young men were founded for the purpose of ordering their lives in accordance with the rules laid down in that book. This book in particular saw many editions, one as late as 1895. Among the editions, there is one by Rabbi Israel Salanter, (Lipkin) the sainted leader of the rigorous ethical movement among the Jews of Lithuania, known as that of *Musar*.

Lefin, true to his desire to enlighten the masses, turned his attention also to the Yiddish vernacular spoken by the Jews. He undertook a new Yiddish translation of the Bible, of which only that of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes appeared. His attempt raised a hue and cry among the Maskilim of the day, who looked down upon Yiddish as a jargon and whose purpose was to lessen its use as much as possible. One of these enlightened, Tobias Gutman Feder (1760-1817), even wrote a polemic pamphlet against the translator, wherein he brands him as a traitor to the cause of Hebrew. But the Galician leaders of the enlightenment intervened and the pamphlet was not published during the lifetime of Feder and Lefin.

ii. A noteworthy literary figure of this epoch was Solomon Poppenheim (1740-1814). Unlike most of the writers of the day, who spent their lives in wandering around, he spent the greater part of his life in one city, Breslau, where he occupied the position of *dayyan* (judge) of the Jewish community. Besides Rabbinic scholarship, he was well versed in philosophy and Hebrew philology, to both of which he made noteworthy contributions. He wrote two philosophical treatises in German entitled *Beiträge zur Berichtigung des Beweises vom Dasein Gottes aus der reinen Vernunft* (Contributions towards the Improvement of the Proof of the Existence of God from Pure Reason) and *Abermaliger Versuch über den ontologischen Beweis vom Dasein Gottes* (Repeated Attempt Concerning the Ontological Proof of the Existence of God). He also wrote a brochure in that language against David Friedländer's proposition to introduce drastic reforms in the system of Jewish education and in the synagogue ritual. Poppenheim, as a rabbi and religious

philosopher, objected to the proposal to introduce German into the Hebrew prayer book and to turn over the education of the Jewish children to the government. He defended warmly the use of Hebrew as the sole language of prayer and insisted that the Jewish communities take charge of the education of their children.

Of his Hebrew works, the most important are: (1) his *Yeriot Shlomoh* (The Curtains of Solomon), a dictionary of synonyms, three parts of which appeared in 1784, 1831, 1818, the third part preceding the second, while the fourth part remained in manuscript; (2) *Heshek Shlomoh* (The Desire of Solomon), a specimen of a large Hebrew lexicon. The lexicon itself never appeared, though the manuscript was preserved for a long time in the hands of Wolf Heidenheim; (3) the *Arba Kosot* (The Four Cups), a poem in prose discussing the vicissitudes of human life, the world, and God's providence.

In his dictionary of synonyms, Poppenheim displays a fine sense of language in distinguishing between the various nuances of the synonyms. Besides, he introduces many philosophic remarks, especially in his introduction to the group of names denoting time, space, and movement, which are distinguished by a ring of originality. Still, great as his services were to the science of the Hebrew language, they were soon superseded by other works, but the impression his prose poem left in Hebrew literature lasted much longer.

The cause which moved Poppenheim to write this poem was a series of misfortunes in his private life. Three of his sons died in infancy, and his wife had died in child birth. All these tribulations drove him to seek comfort, and the poem was the result. It is divided into four parts, the first of which is named *Kos ha-Tar'elah* (The Cup of Suffering), where, in most elevated style, the author draws a gloomy picture of human life. Like Job of old, he pours forth a series of complaints before God, asking why he endowed man with sight and hearing which make life more miserable on account of the sight of suffering and the cry of the unfortunate. He bewails the deceitful heart of man, his cunning and evil mind. He bemoans poverty and old age, and then passes on to his personal suffering experienced at the death of his wife and sons. The pictures are touching and stirring. In the second part, called *Kos Tanhumim* (The Cup of Comfort), Poppenheim offers comfort to the sufferer by proving that there is less evil in the world as compared with the good in it, and by pointing to the beauty of nature which should cheer man in his tribulation. He says, "Evil is relative, for

what may be evil for one may bring good to another, but man is short-sighted and cannot see the totality of events. Evil may also prove to be good in disguise to the same man." He cites as an example the change of heart that occurs in man at the loss of a child, when he becomes generous and finds comfort in charitable deeds. He concludes by proclaiming that it is man's pursuit of luxury which brings most of the evil.

The third part, called *Kos be-Yad Elohim* (A Cup in the Hand of God), presents the answer of God to the complaints of man. God replies, first, that the origin of evil which accrues to man lies in the sin of Adam; second, that man is subject to the laws of nature, and if he does not observe them, he suffers the consequences; third, that evil comes as a reminder of repentance; fourth, as a trial; fifth, that suffering hardens man and makes him more fit for the battle of life; and finally, that compensation for suffering is in the world to come. The fourth part, *Kos Yeshuot* (The Cup of Salvation), deals with the providence of God and his goodness to man. It is introduced by a short but exalted chapter on the beauty of the day, contrasting the gloom of night with the sunlit morning. The poem concludes with a few chapters on the value of social and political life which men had evolved with the help of God. The author emphasizes the interdependence of men, and he avers that in the course of events men often work for the benefit of others, though unintentionally. The poem is thus a miniature imitation of the Book of Job, for like it, its main concern is with the problem of suffering; and the solutions it offers to this difficult problem are more positive than those of the Biblical drama, even if not entirely satisfactory. The *Arba Kosot* enjoyed great popularity both on account of its content and its style. It saw thirteen editions, the latest in 1881.

23. SOLOMON LÖWISOHN

The most distinguished member of the Austrian group of writers was Solomon Löwisohn (1788-1821), poet, historian, grammarian, and linguist. In him were united the deep feeling soul of a great poet and the brilliant, penetrating mind of a thinker and searcher. Were he not cut off by tragic circumstances in the midst of his active life, he would certainly have become one of the outstanding figures in modern Hebrew literature.

He was born in Moor, a small Hungarian town, and his original family name was Moor but was later changed to Löwisohn, i.e., the son of Levi, his father's name. While yet a youth, he distinguished himself by his exceptional abilities, and he was quite famous for his mastery of the Bible and Talmud. His father, who was inoculated with the spirit of enlightenment, sent him to the monastery school of the town in order to learn German and mathematics. In that school, he acquired his first taste for secular education, studying there not only German and mathematics, but also Latin. He perfected his knowledge by self-study, and in a short time mastered French and Italian. He later entered the academy at Prague, where the famous humorist, Moritz Gottlieb Saphir, was his fellow-pupil. In Prague Löwisohn began his literary activity by composing several lexicographical works, and there he continued his education. He entered the university and devoted himself to the study of Semitic and classical languages, especially Greek and Syriac. He also widened his mastery of European languages by adding English to the store of his knowledge. Prague, which was at the time a center of Jewish learning, the home of many scholars and writers, afforded Löwisohn spiritual satisfaction and congenial company, but no means for a comfortable livelihood. He, therefore, after a few years of sojourn in that city, accepted a position as corrector and proof-reader in the famous Hebrew printing-press of Anton Schmid at Vienna, a position held previously, as we have seen, by scholars and writers. In the first five years of his residence in Vienna, from 1815 to 1820, Löwisohn's genius blossomed forth in all fields. During this time, he wrote his most important works and emitted the sweetest tunes. But soon the clouds began to gather, and, with the beginning of the year 1821, he became melancholy and showed signs of insanity which, of course, prevented him from fulfilling his duties properly. The cause of his malady was an unrequited love for a beautiful and intelligent young lady. Schmid, who suffered from the irregularities of Löwisohn, bore with him for some time, but finally discharged him. This new misfortune aggravated his malady and he became totally insane. His relative, Solomon Rosenthal, brought the writer to his native town in the hope that he would recover, but three months after his return, he died at the age of thirty-three.

The first literary efforts of Löwisohn were made in the field of philology. While yet a youth of twenty-one, he wrote his *Sihah be-Olam ha-Neshomot* (A Dialogue in the World of Spirits), a dia-

logue held between the great Mediaeval grammarian, David Kimhi (Vol. I, Sec. 104) and Joel Bril (Sec. 19). The dialogue deals with certain problems in the usage of Hebrew verbs and that of Aramaic words and expressions. This was followed a year later by the *Bet ha-Osef* (The Treasure House) which contains among other things a sketch of the grammar of Mishnaic Hebrew as well as an introduction to lexicography. This attempt, the first in its time, evoked the praises of scholars, among them the great master of Hebrew, Samuel David Luzzatto (Sec. 69). The grammatical sketch was later included in a new edition of the Mishnah issued by Anton Schmid under the supervision of Löwisohn himself, and was subsequently reprinted in almost every edition of the Mishnah.

From Hebrew philology and researches in the language of the Mishnah, Löwisohn turned to the Bible. He published in 1819 his *Mehkerē Erez* (Studies in the Geography of the Holy Land), the first Biblical geographical and historical dictionary. In it the author describes in alphabetical order the geographical location of all countries, cities, seas, rivers, and mountains mentioned in the Bible, their nature and character as well as all historical data connected with them. Some of the important cities such as Jerusalem, Babylon, and Tyre are described in long articles, which in reality are monographs on the subjects. The work contains also many exegetic remarks which display Löwisohn's fine sense for the understanding of the Bible. It made a great impression upon his contemporaries and evoked the praise of scholars. Only two years after its appearance, it was translated into German under the name *Biblische Geographie mit einer Karte des Schauplatzes der Bibel*. A second edition appeared at Wilna in 1839 by J. Kaplan, together with an introduction by Mordecai Aaron Günzburg. In this edition, the title was changed to *Erez Kdumim* (The Land of the Past).

Valuable as all these works were, however, the fame of our author rests primarily on another work which preceded the Biblical geography by two years. This is the *Melizat Yeshurun* (The Poetry of Israel, Yeshurun being another name for the Jewish People). It aims to give the poetic approach to the Bible and an aesthetic evaluation of its style and contents. It has not as yet been superseded in Hebrew literature. In this work, the poet, the deep thinker, and the scholar find their highest expression. Its value is enhanced by the fact that it contains the only specimens of Löwisohn's poetic productions. He must have written many poems, but most of them

were destroyed by him in his fits of insanity. We possess only his elegy on the death of his friend, Baruch Jeiteles, large excerpts of which are included in that work, and his long introductory poem, *ha-Melizah Medaberet* (Poetry Speaks). It is this single poem in blank verse which establishes his claim to the title of a great poet.

In this poem, the author expresses the ideal of the entire generation of the enlightened, who in their revulsion at the sordid life of the ghetto strove and longed for beauty. But while to most of these Maskilim, the desire for beauty was more of an intellectual necessity, a kind of artificial emotion, to Löwisohn it was a deep and stirring passion, the very essence of his soul and the source of his inspiration. The poem is divided into two parts, one devoted to beauty and the other to poetry. The opening stanza runs as follows:

When God commanded the immense void,
Be land, the formless waste—to be a world,
He also bade beloved Beauty, who
Had been to him a source of pleasure,
To shed upon Creation her divine,
Her noble, wondrous, and eternal spell,
And fields and forests, hills and dales,
Appear'd embroider'd with luxuriant soft
And velvet verdure, purple-proud burst
The roses into blossom, milk-white
Again the innocent and stainless lilies,
And fire-red blazed the stately vine.*

After thus describing the revelation of beauty in the kingdom of plants, he depicts its workings even in the bowels of the earth, its reflection in the glimmer of the precious metals of silver and gold, in the sparkling red of the ruby, in the sky-blue of the sapphire, and the snow-white of the crystal. He then turns to the animal kingdom, and passes before us the beauty displayed in the bodies or parts of bodies of some of its specimens, in the stately horns of the deer, the mighty wings of the eagle, the many-hued plumage of the birds, and even in the symmetrically spotted skin of the leopard. The beauty of man, both of his body and soul, is his next subject.

The second part is a monologue of poetry or the poetic spirit. It consists of a series of descriptions of the effects of poetry upon the life of man. It arouses love and compassion; it awakens courage

* Translation taken from J. L. Landau's "Short Lectures on Modern Hebrew Literature," pp. 107-108.

in the hearts of the weak; it comforts the unfortunate and bereaved; it is equally omnipotent in the torrid climes of the tropics and in the snow-covered lands of the north, in the monotonous desert and on the stormy high seas. It is found in the palaces of the rich and in the hovels of the poor. The peasant in the field goes out to his work with a song on his lips and the laborer eases his hard toil by reciting snatches of poems. Poetry is everywhere, it fills human life in all its aspects, both in joy and sorrow.

After this apotheosis of beauty and poetry, the author turns to his task, to give an aesthetic appreciation of the Bible. He begins with the description of the role which the sublime plays in the Old Testament. He first defines the sublime by distinguishing between it and the beautiful. The sublime, says he, deals primarily with the extraordinary, with the new. Its essence lies in the astonishment and amazement it arouses in the soul of man. The beautiful may please us and comfort us, but the sublime, with its grandeur and magnitude, overwhelms us and stirs the depths of the soul. He then goes on to discuss the aspects of the sublime presented by the various senses, especially by those of sight and hearing. He illustrates his theories by profuse quotations from the Bible and also from Mediaeval and modern poets, such as ha-Levi, Moses Hayyim Luzzatto, Joel Bril, and from his own poems. His own descriptions and dramatizations of some of the Biblical episodes quoted reveal the spirit of genuine poetry. Here is one of such descriptions. It depicts the scene of Elijah standing before God at Mount Horeb, as told in 2 Kings, Ch. XIX, 8-14 and reads as follows: "Night had descended upon the desert and the quiet of the darkness merged with the stillness of the plain. The silence is suddenly broken by the sound of the steps of the prophet, who walks alone in the darkness and stillness like one of the gods in the dusk of chaos before heaven and earth sprang into existence. The sound of the steps ceases, and the prophet rests in a cave by the mountainside and quietude reigns once more. Again, the stillness is broken, this time by the thundering voice of God, which reverberates through the desert in the night: 'What dost thou here, Elijah?' The rumble of that voice echoes in the distance like the rumble of the thunder before a gathering storm on a hot summer day. And ere it dies down, and behold, on the wings of a mighty wind, there is borne the sound of another voice, mightier than the first: 'Go out and stand on the mountain before God.' Now

a storm breaks loose, the fastnesses of the world are shattered, mountains totter like drunkards, rocks are splintered like vessels of clay, cedars snap like strings, and oaks break like reeds. Even the deep trembles at the voice of God, and fountains break forth and flood the world. And then suddenly all ceases, the quiet voice of God speaks, and at its sound, the world ceases its trembling, destruction passes, and order is restored. He speaks in anger and worlds turn to naught; He speaks in kindness and worlds spring forth from naught."¹⁸

After discussing the various sublime forms of writing found in the Old Testament, the author turns to the devices of comparison and parable used in poetry, and he presents these matters in detail by profuse illustrations from the Scriptures and from modern poets. In this section, he gives a complete analysis of the Song of Songs. He considers it to have been written by Solomon, but as a secular love poem relating the love of the king for a beautiful girl, a farmer's daughter, who rejected his love because her heart was captivated by a handsome shepherd. This opinion was previously voiced by Lessing and Herder, but was for the first time pronounced in Hebrew literature. Löwisohn divides the book into fourteen parts which contain dialogues between Solomon and his beloved Shulamit, and between her and the handsome shepherd.

The third section is devoted to the other forms of exalted writing, or poetic figures. The author discusses in detail the forms of apostrophe, personification, irony, interrogation, antithesis, and all other devices. These discussions, however, are not mere rhetorical statements, but are permeated by the poetical spirit of the writer who penetrates into the very warp and woof of the Biblical style, and discovers for us the treasures of beauty hidden there. The analysis of poems culled from both the prophetic and poetical books of the Scriptures, such as the Song of Moses (Ex. Ch. XV) and many chapters of the Psalms or of Job, convey to the reader a vivid impression of the beauty of the Bible. Löwisohn is especially keen in his discerning the sublime and the beautiful in the nature descriptions found in the Scriptures. He was one of the first to recognize the influence of natural environment upon the writers of the Bible; and with painstaking effort he depicts the roles played by the desert, mountains, valleys, forests, storms, and changes of seasons in the word pictures of the prophets and poets of the Old

¹⁸ *Melizat Yeshurun*, p. 15a.

Testament. His own soul was attuned to the spirit of the Orient which pervades these writings, and he, more than anyone, could easily detect its delicate beauty. The *Melizat Yeshurun*, though written more than a hundred years ago, has not lost its value even today and can still serve as a manual for an aesthetic and poetic appreciation of the Old Testament.

Löwisohn also wrote a volume in German on Jewish history, entitled *Vorlesungen über die neue Geschichte der Juden*. In this work, as in all the others, he displayed a keen insight into the subject of his study. His description of events is vivid and pictorial and his attitude to the history of his people is one of love and admiration. The greatest Jewish historian of the nineteenth century, Heinrich Graetz, said of him, "He regarded Jewish history both from the standpoint of poetry and from that of faith."¹⁹ These two qualities, which unfortunately are seldom possessed by historians, are necessary prerequisites for the proper understanding of the history of such a peculiar people as the Jews. This gifted youth was thus a pathfinder not only in the appreciation of the sacred Scriptures of his people, but also in the understanding of their tradition.

24. SHALOM HA-COHEN

The last of this group of writers, whose activities embrace the second epoch of the Haskalah period, was Shalom ha-Cohen (1772-1845). He was a prolific writer, an energetic worker on behalf of the Haskalah, and one who not only left his impress upon his generation, but was the most active factor in transferring the young plant of modern Hebrew literature from its original soil—Germany, which became barren, to other lands and climes where it struck root and became a mighty tree bearing precious fruit. He bridged the two periods of the Haskalah literature, and it was to a great extent through his efforts that the second period opened with great promise for future fruitfulness.

Like many of the Haskalah writers, Shalom ha-Cohen was born in Poland in the town of Mezherich, and like them he gravitated to Berlin, the center of enlightenment. He arrived there in the year 1789, a youth of seventeen, poor and penniless, with only a bundle of Hebrew manuscripts containing his first poems in his possession. He was, however, rich in hopes and dreams, and soon made the acquaintance of some of the enlightened, among them Naphtali

¹⁹ Graetz, *Geschichte*, Heb. Translation Vol. IX, p. 300.

Wessely, who recognized in this youth his heir in the field of Hebrew poetry. With the assistance of his friends, Cohen managed to continue his stay in the Prussian capital, and, in the year 1799, he succeeded in publishing his first work, the *Mishlê Agur*, a collection of rhymed fables and proverbs in Hebrew with a German prose translation. The work attracted the attention of the Maskilim of the time and improved his economic position, for he was appointed as a teacher in the modern Hebrew school at Berlin, and he also gave instruction to children of rich families, among them young Meyerbeer, the future composer. He then entertained hopes of reviving the *Measef* which ceased publication in 1797, and turned to Isaac Eichel, its last editor, for assistance in this project. But the aged Maskil was so disheartened at the futility of repeated attempts to revive the knowledge of Hebrew in Germany, that he wrote Cohen a letter full of despair, in which he pointed out the hopelessness of the situation.

Cohen, though, did not despair and did not cease to work in the field of Hebrew literature, and in 1807 he published his second work, *Mataê Kedem 'Al Admat Zafon* (Oriental Plants in the Soil of the North), containing several historical poems and a Biblical drama in two acts. This, like his earlier work, was accompanied by a German translation. The second work was received with still greater approbation than his first by the lovers of Hebrew at the time, and ten years later in 1817, it appeared in a second edition. Cohen was greatly encouraged by his literary success and he undertook to realize his cherished dream of reviving the *Measef*. In 1808 he began its publication, but, though the renewed monthly under his able editorship was decidedly improved in tone and character, the attempt was not successful. After three years of bitter struggle, during which the plans of publication of the monthly were continually changed, he was forced to abandon his plan, and the *Measef* once more ceased to appear. The zeal of the champion of Hebrew literature, however, was not dampened by failure and immediately after the cessation of the *Measef*, he published his allegoric drama, *'Amal we-Tirzah*.

In 1813 Shalom left Germany and sojourned for a time in Holland, where he published a long Hebrew poem under the name *Mas'a Batavia* (The Burden of Batavia) in honor of Holland's liberation from the yoke of Napoleon. From there he went to London, where he spent a few years publishing occasional Hebrew poems with an

English translation. He then returned to Hamburg where he was married. There he was involved in the strife between the Orthodox Party and the leaders of the newly-founded Reformed Temple. Cohen sided with the Orthodox, opposing the intended changes in the prayer-book proposed by the rabbi of the Temple, Eduard Kley. He also translated into German a number of Responsa by leading rabbis of Western Europe, condemning the changes in the ritual, and published them in the well-known book, *Ēle Dibrē ha-Brit* (The Words of the Covenant, Sec. 71).

In 1820, he was called by Anton Schmid to Vienna to succeed Löwisohn as proof-reader and manager of his Hebrew printing department. There he lived for sixteen years, during which time he published his *Ketab Yosher*, an epistolary containing a number of letters as models of the art of letter-writing both in Hebrew and German, and his magnum opus, *Ner David* (The Light or Hope of David), a kind of Davidiada in twenty cantos. There he also established, at the request of Schmid, the *Bikḥurē ha-Ittim*, a literary annual which was issued for twelve years and was destined to play an exceptional role in the development of Hebrew literature. Cohen was its editor for only three years, but we must accord him the honor due to the founder of such an important vehicle of literary expression.

From Vienna, he returned once more to Hamburg to spend the last ten years of his life, and he wrote there a Jewish history in three volumes, called *Korē ha-Dorot* (The Herald of Generations). The history was supposed to cover from the period of the Hasmoneans to the beginning of the Reform movement, but only the first part, from the Maccabees to the destruction of the Second Temple, was published; the rest supposedly remained in manuscript.

Although Shalom ha-Cohen was, as we have seen a prolific writer in many fields of literature—he even composed a drama in German entitled “Dion”—it was primarily as a Hebrew poet that he was considered by his contemporaries; and Franz Delitzsch, the historian of Hebrew poetry, places him on a level with Wessely. He calls them both the great poets of German Jewry who have produced literary creations in Hebrew, which can be favorably compared with the works of the German pre-Goethian school.²⁰ The enlightened Jews of his time revered him as the sweet singer of Israel. Consequently, we shall have to appreciate him from the point of view

²⁰ *Geschichte der jüdischen Poesie*, p. 39.

of the history of modern Hebrew literature, namely, as a poet, for his other works have little permanent value. The history is essentially an elaboration of Jost's *Geschichte*, and Cohen's contribution consists in his flowing Hebrew style. The epistolary likewise is only a matter of style and not of content. Unfortunately, however, we cannot endorse the view of his contemporaries of his poetic ability, for he can by no means measure up to Wessely, Joseph Ephrati, and certainly not to Solomon Löwisohn. Yet, we do meet in his poems sparks of poetic genius and passages of great beauty, but these occur mostly in the smaller works and very rarely in his large epic poem, *Ner David*.

The *Mataé Kedem* originally contained three poetic works: (a) an epical poem on Abraham in *Ur-Kasdim* (Ur of the Chaldees); (b) several poems portraying incidents in the life of David; and (c) *Nabot ha-Yisraeli*, a drama of two acts based on the story in I Kings Ch. XXI, wherein it is told how Ahab coveted the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreelite, and, having been instigated by the queen Jezebel, contrived his death in order to take the garden. In the epic, the poet portrays skillfully the birth of the idea of monotheism in the mind of Abraham, his rebellion against the paganism of his father's house, his condemnation, and his final salvation from the lime kiln. It contains fine passages, especially those which describe the musings of Abraham when contemplating the forces of nature, but none which are particularly soul-stirring. The Davidic poems are permeated by deeper poetic feeling, displayed mainly in "Absalom" and in the "Song of Thankfulness." In the first, the plight of Absalom, when he remained hanging in the tree by his hair, and his despair on being thwarted in his efforts to ascend the throne by such a trifling incident are masterfully depicted. In the second poem, the pathetic moment, when King David, after Barzilai's refusal to accompany him to Jerusalem, realizes that a quiet, idyllic, rural life is preferable to the glittering but tumultuous one of a crowned head, is well portrayed.

The short drama rises even to a greater height. The characters of Jezebel and Ahab are well drawn. The first appears before us as the arrogant and wicked queen, daughter of Sidon, who in her heart harbors contempt for the uncultured Jews and uses the king only as a tool for her ambition. The second is represented as the vacillating character that he was, who at times feels the pangs of deep remorse but yields to the wishes of his powerful queen. Two

scenes are especially impressive, the second in Act I, where the children of Naboth, playing in their vineyard, express their glee at the luscious clusters of grapes on the vines, entirely unaware of the impending doom, and the fourth in Act II, where Ahab, walking in Naboth's garden and contemplating its charms, feels the sting of bitter remorse at his act. Grand is also the scene depicting the appearance of the prophet Elijah, the nemesis of Ahab, and his pronouncement of the doom threatening the king and queen. Ahab quakes before the prophet, but the arrogant queen seizes a sword and wants to stab him. Her hand suddenly withers and perforce she must listen to the dire prophecy of her destined fate from the lips of the enraged seer.

Cohen's drama, *'Amal we-Tirzah*, displays the influence of Luzzatto's *la-Yesharim Tehillah*, but it possesses some original features. The main novelty is the theme of social injustice. *'Amal* (Labor), a farmer, is exploited by a usurer *Rahab* (Arrogance); *Yosher* (Righteousness) is on the side of *'Amal*, and, with their combined efforts, the designs of *Rahab* are defeated, and he pleads for mercy. *'Amal* and *Yosher* are ready to forgive him, but the king *Mishpat* (Justice) proclaims that justice must triumph, and *Rahab* is punished according to his deserts. The drama, however, bears also evident signs of conscious imitation of Luzzatto's work. Like the *la-Yesharim Tehillah*, the *'Amal we-Tirzah* contains monologues on the beauties of nature and the happiness of a quiet rural life, and finally a long monologue on the nature of the plants, which reminds us strongly of the description of plant life by Luzzatto.

Imitation was quite a trait in Cohen, and it is especially evident in his magnum opus, *Ner David*. The whole poem, intended as a Davidiada, is modeled after Wessely's *Shirē Tiferet*, which was intended as a Mosaide. He also imitated its form, the cantos being written in blank verse with introductions to the cantos in rhyme, and occasionally borrowed a feature from other contemporary poets. Thus, in the third canto, he turns to David and asks him to lend him his harp so that he may be able to sing of the deeds of the young hero. This fine poetic device is borrowed from Elijah Halfan (Sec. 21) who first employed it in the opening stanza of his poem *ha-Shalom*. The epic itself falls much below the *Shirē Tiferet*. It lacks the pathos and the religious fervor of the former and even the descriptive power evinced by Wessely. The poet adds little to the Biblical narrative of the life of David, which is given

by him in full, as in I and II Samuel, without any poetic insight or psychological interpretation of the events. Only from time to time is there evident a touch of dramatization. He makes a feeble protest against the seeming injustice of the punishment meted out by God on Saul for his slight transgression in not annihilating the cattle of the Amalekites. He introduces in the fourth canto a little dramatic scene in hell where the powers of evil hold council on how to retard the rising fortunes of David after his smiting of Goliath, and where *Baal Zebub*, one of the leading princes of wickedness, undertakes to strike Saul with the arrow of jealousy. A similar device is introduced by him in the fifteenth canto when relating the sinful passion of David for *Bath Sheba*. The story of David's infatuation is preceded in the manner of the prologue of the Book of Job by a dialogue in heaven between God and Satan. God asks the latter whether he has ever seen a man as righteous as David. Satan asks for permission to tempt David, which permission is granted, and the sin of David is the result. With these exceptions, the long poem is merely a paraphrase of the story of David. Cohen's contemporaries were more impressed by the quantity of the work than by the quality. Yet the works of Cohen exerted influence upon creations of later poets, such as Lebensohn and J. L. Gordon, both of whom exceeded him in depth and beauty.

The real service of Shalom ha-Cohen was his indefatigable efforts on behalf of the development of the Hebrew literature. It was through his zeal manifested in the reviving of the *Measef* and in the founding of the *Bikkurē ha-'Ittim*, that the sun of Hebrew literature, when sinking in the West, began to rise again in the East.

25. THE BIKKURĒ HA-'ITTIM AND ITS GROUP OF WRITERS

We have already referred to the value of the annual *Bikkurē ha-'Ittim* as an important factor in the development of modern Hebrew literature, but its influence cannot be disposed of in a few words, and it deserves a more detailed description. In general, it can be said that this annual, which appeared for twelve years (1820-1831), was the seminary in which the early writers, poets, and scholars of the first epoch of the second Haskalah period were nourished, trained, and prepared for their future activity. It was there that the builders of "Jewish Science," Solomon Judah Rapo-

port, Samuel David Luzzatto, and Isaac Samuel Reggio, the poet Meir Letteris, the satirist Isaac Erter made their debut, and from the praise of the editors and readers drew encouragement and inspiration for further activity in the field of Jewish literature. But it was even more than that. It was a gathering place, a kind of literary clearing house, for numerous writers from all lands of the West, and several countries of the East, whither they turned and each brought his mite into the treasure-house of Hebrew literature. This host of lesser lights, whose names did not survive through the generations, served as media through which love for Hebrew literature and the desire to continue its creative activity spread to many Jewish centers. And some there were among them whose works, though forgotten, do in fact deserve a better place in the memory of future generations. But whether the work of this group of writers is remembered or forgotten, it served a useful purpose, for not only was it an incentive for the more able writers to continue their activity, but it actually formed the foundation upon which the great edifice of the literature of the second Haskalah period was reared.

The *Bikkurē ha-Ittim* was founded by the Christian printer of Hebrew books, Anton Schmid of Vienna, at the initiative of Shalom ha-Cohen, who edited it for the first three years. Its first steps were cautious. Both editor and publisher were not certain of their reading public. The decline of the Haskalah movement in Germany was not encouraging for any literary periodical in Hebrew. They, therefore, included, in the first volume, essays of Jewish interest in German, written in Hebrew characters. In addition, they reprinted selected essays and poems of the *Measef*, and finally the first four volumes contained surveys of Jewish and general contemporary life, as well as useful information on business matters, in German. As the response of the public became more and more favorable, the German essays were reduced to a minimum, the business information and surveys were dropped, and the reprints from the *Measef* occupied less and less space until, in the ninth volume, they ceased altogether. The place of these eliminated features was taken by longer Hebrew essays, by numerous poems, by discussions on various subjects, and sometimes by the inclusion of complete works, such as the first part of the collected poems of Samuel David Luzzatto, entitled *Kinor Naim* (Sweet Harp), and Solomon Judah Rapoport's translation of Racine's drama *Esther*, renamed *She'ērit Yehudah*, published in the sixth and eighth volumes respectively.

The periodical had several editors; Shalom ha-Cohen was succeeded by Moses Landau, Solomon Pergamenter, Isaac Baer Schlesinger, Judah Jeiteles and Isaac Samuel Reggio. And just as the editors represented several countries, for Reggio hailed from Italy, Pergamenter from Galicia, Schlesinger and Jeiteles from Bohemia, so were its contributors representatives of many countries. The Galicians, Rapoport and Letteris, made their literary debut in the first issue of the annual, each contributing a poem. In the later issues, Rapoport published his famous biographical essays. They were joined by many of their countrymen, notably Marcus Strelisker and Baruch Schönfeld. Italy was represented by Samuel David Luzzatto, and Isaac Samuel Reggio, Russia by Isaac Benjacob, and others. Hungary contributed its quota of writers, among them the well-known liberal, Rabbi Aaron Chorin, who took such an active part in the Reform movement (Sec. 71) and Gabriel Südfeld, the father of Max Nordau. Even Germany was represented by a writer, David Zamoscz. These, and many others, helped to make the *Bikkurē ha-'Ittim* a vehicle of literary expression of the greater part of world Jewery.

The general character of the periodical resembles to a great extent that of the *Measef*, though with many improvements. Poetry is still a predominant feature, and the greater part of it consists of translations and elaborations of German, or occasionally, even of French poems. Fables, parables, and elegant sentences or apothegms, either in verse or euphuistic prose, are quite in evidence. Almost every writer thought it his duty to break forth in song before he turned to some other field of literary activity. The writing of poetry served these aspirants to literary fame as a patent of nobility, as evidence that henceforth they belong to the group of literati. We see then the curious phenomenon that excellent philologists, men with a keen sense for language, good exegetes, and scholars of wide learning in various fields of knowledge insisted continually upon being poor poets and quite often even unskilled versifiers. Even the great historian Rapoport began his literary activity, as was noted, with an exceedingly poor translation of a poem by Schiller, and eight years later followed it with other poems equally poor, concluding his poetic career with the translation of Racine's drama, *Esther*. Next to poetry and moral fable writing, the most important place is occupied by philological discussions, explanations of difficult verses in the Bible and passages in the Talmud. Some of these lexicographical essays are long and of great value; such are the philological and exegetical essays of Luzzatto

where the keen sense of language of this master of Hebrew is displayed and his penetrating power as a commentator of the Bible is revealed. In the later volumes, the historical essay makes its appearance, the best examples of which are the biographical studies of Rapoport. There are other species of literature represented in the *Bikkurē ha-'Ittim*, among them the first satire of Erter, but the prose novel and story is still absent from Hebrew literature.

Of the other contributors to the Periodical, besides those who afterwards distinguished themselves in various literary fields and whose activities will be described more fully later, the following deserve to be mentioned. They can be classed together as the *Bikkurē ha-'Ittim* group of writers.

i. The first in importance is Judah Jeiteles (1773-1838). His father, Jonah, was the first Jewish physician admitted to practice by the government and was a leader in the Jewish community in Prague. His brother Baruch was a well-known scholar in his time, who wrote several works in Rabbinics as well as elegies on the deaths of Emperor Joseph II and Ezekiel Landau. Judah was one of the chief contributors to the Annual and the editor of its last volume. From 1823 to 1832, Jeiteles participated in every volume of the publication. He wrote poems, fables, epigrams, and notes on philological matters, especially on the Aramaic of the *Targum* which was his special field of study. He distinguished himself in the writing of epigrams and moral proverbs. These together with his poems and fables were later collected by him in a book, entitled *Benē ha-Ne'urim* (The Children of Youth). Though himself the son of a physician, physicians were often the butt of his wit; women and misers were the other targets of the arrows of his satire. Some of his elegant moral proverbs which were published in the annual contain deep thoughts, of which the following can serve as illustrations. On friends: "Some friends are like a sun-dial; when the sun sets, they become useless." On misfortune, "The crucible removes the dross from silver; the wind clears the sky from clouds, and misfortune purifies the hearts of man from evil thoughts." On vanity, "It is easier for a man to confess to his crime than to his defects."²¹ Of his works in other fields, we may mention his *Mebo Leshon Aramit*, a short Aramaic grammar, together with a Chrestomathy and a new German translation of the Old Testament with a Hebrew commentary.

ii. Baer Schlesinger was another important contributor. Like

²¹ *Bikkurē ha-'Ittim*, Vol. IX, p. 224; Vol. XI, p. 189.

Jeiteles and others, he was versatile and wrote many poems, fables, and epigrams. but still more short essays on philological and exegetical subjects. Explanations of difficult Biblical verses were his delight and they are found in every volume beginning with the sixth. He, however, considered himself more of a poet than a commentator and undertook to write an historical epic poem entitled *ha-Hashmonaim* (The Hasmoneans) relating the deeds of the Maccabees. Of this poem, only the first part appeared in 1816. It is divided into seven cantos, and contains four hundred and thirty stanzas of sixteen lines each.

iii. Among the frequent contributors of the annual was Baruch Schönfeld. He translated many poems from the German and the Latin, composed fables, and wrote long essays on historical subjects, among them on the political order of the Jews as established by Moses. Of his other works, the important are *Zeror Peraḥim* (A Bundle of Flowers), a collection of poems and euphuistic prose essays, and the *Musar Haskel*, a text book on the principles of Jewish ethics.

iv. David Zamoscz (1789-1864) contributed from time to time poems to the *Bikkurē ha-Ittim*, and he was otherwise a prolific writer composing numerous works. The most important are: (1) *Pilegesh be-Gibah*, a Biblical drama based on the story in the Book of Judges, Chapters XIX, XX; (2) *Resise ha-Melizah*, a collection of short poems, both original and translated; (3) *Toar ha-Zeman* (The Reflection of the Times), poetic reflections in dialogue form; (4) *Nahar me-Eden*, a collection of Biblical stories in Hebrew and German; (5) *Yaldut Moshe* (The Youth of Moses), a translation of a long dramatic poem on the life of Moses in Midian, in French, by Madame de Genlis; and (6) *Agudat Shoshanim* (a Bundle of Roses), a collection of poems, epigrams and stories. He wrote also numerous elegies and occasional poems at the celebration of important communal events and a manual of religious instruction.

v. Among the lesser lights who enriched the annual with their productions were David Caro, Marcus Strelisker, Yom Tob Spitz, Solomon Pergamenter, Joseph Flesch, Joseph Barget, and others. They wrote poems, fables, epigrams, and essays. Many of the essays, like the poems, were translations dealing mostly with exalted subjects, such as immortality, hope, vicissitudes of life, and similar matters. At times, the essayists turned to historical subjects or to the biographies of great men. The style of the essays were, of course,

still Biblical and euphuistic, but attempts were made at precision of expression.

Thus, the *Bikkurē ha-Ittim*, though the contents of its volumes, with the exception of the essays of Rapoport and the researches of Luzzatto, have little permanent value, yet filled an important function in the development of Hebrew literature. It brought together numerous writers of many countries and made them express the best that was in them. Their contemporaries admired their skill, enjoyed their poetic outbursts, and were stimulated to thought and study by their exegetic explanations, comments, and remarks. As a result people were interested in the reading of Hebrew and the spreading of its knowledge, and thus an impetus was given to the continuation of that literature.

CHAPTER III
SECOND HASKALAH PERIOD

FIRST EPOCH

26. *THE SPIRIT OF THE TIME AND ITS MANIFESTATIONS*

The second period of literary activity among the Jews in modern times, which embraces roughly a span of about sixty years, was distinguished by great fertility in various fields of intellectual and spiritual endeavor and by variety of literary productivity. It was this period during which the great transformation in Jewish life from that of the ghetto type to the modern one took place. It was a period which was filled to the brim with new ideas, with intellectual currents of various characters, and with movements of opposite tendencies.

All these ideas, currents, and movements were reflected in the literature of the times, which, in turn became an active factor in the generation of new tendencies in life or in altering and reshaping the old. It is impossible to measure the nature of this variegated literature without first surveying the manifestation of the spirit of the period which, though it assumed different forms in the various Jewries of the world, was yet to a great extent, unified in character.

27. *THE WEST*

Although the majority of the Jews of Europe, then as now, resided in Eastern countries, and though the movement of enlightenment, which originated in the West, practically ceased to exist in the place of its origin by the early twenties of the last century, the West continued to exert great influence over the Eastern Jewries during the greater part of the period. The movement of enlightenment, which at this time was wholly confined to Eastern Europe, did not emancipate itself from the influence of the more cultured and more modernized Western Jewry for a long time. It was only toward the end of the period, when the Jewries of the West through

a combination of circumstances were drained of intellectual energy while those of the East increased in power, that the relation was reversed and the East began to exert influence upon the West. It is, therefore, necessary for us to turn first to the West and survey the vicissitudes of the Jewish spirit.

The fundamental characteristic of that spirit during the greater part of the period is its centrifugal tendency. During two-thirds of the time, there prevailed in Germany and adjacent countries of the West a desire on the part of the leaders to turn Jewish life away from its concentrated form, from the standardized type which made Judaism through the ages a distinct and unified spiritual entity, in spite of the diversity of character of the scattered Jewries. This, as is well known, gave rise to the great movement of the Jewish Reformation which resulted in the evolution of Reform Judaism.

By 1820 there was no more room in Germany for the movement of enlightenment, which aimed at a reconciliation between Judaism and the modern spirit by introducing changes in the methods of education as well as spreading general knowledge among the Jews. Life ran ahead of the movement. General education was prevalent, a large part of the Jews emerged from the ghetto spiritually and intellectually, and the upper stratum also economically. But they found themselves hampered in all ways by the legal ghetto which still existed in full force. The great contradiction in the lives of the Jews between their intellectual positions and the legal one aroused in the hearts of Jewish youth a strong resentment against Judaism, which they considered their immediate source of suffering. As a result, the desire for emancipation became a passion, nay, even an obsession, and these "ghetto-emancipated" Jews were ready to procure it at any cost. Many of them agreed with Heine, who epitomized the attitude of these Jews toward Judaism in the famous saying, "Das Judentum ist kein Religion, es ist ein Unglück." (Judaism is not a religion but a misfortune). As a result, there began the wholesale escape from Judaism by the only means open to them, conversion. David Friedländer, the leader of the enlightened Jews, even made, as we have seen, in 1799, an attempt to found a new Jewish sect which should embrace Christianity in part, without accepting its principles and dogmas. But his attempt was frustrated. The movement of conversion then gathered force, but those who did not want to take the final step turned to the idea of reform.

The first open declaration on behalf of a reform in Judaism came

from the same Friedländer who, during the years 1811-1815, continually insisted that the precepts and religious ceremonies had lost all value, for they were merely symbols of the ethical teachings connected with them, and there was no more need for the symbols. These ideas had previously been expressed by a disciple of Mendelssohn, the philosopher, Lazarus Bendavid, who, in a pamphlet entitled *Etwas zur Charakteristik der Juden* (On the Character of the Jews), maintained that the religious precepts prescribed by the Torah had lost their validity and that the essence of Judaism consisted primarily in a belief in God and its ethical content.

These statements, voiced early in the last century and which were an extreme expression of the centrifugal movement, were not immediately shared by all leaders of the Reform movement. Such a transformation in the character of a religion which was for millennia a complete way of life could not be effected without a severe struggle. The first steps of the Reformation were cautious and dealt primarily with changes in the form of public worship. It took more than three decades for the ideas underlying this movement to crystallize and assume definite shape. This is not the place to write the history of the Reform movement, its vicissitudes and struggles,¹ but it can be said that in practice it never divested Judaism of the performance of a large part of the precepts and ceremonies, but on the contrary, it retained many ceremonies and enjoined their observance. Moreover, in matters of opinion and theory defining the essence of Judaism, a clear unanimous view was never adopted, at least as far as Germany was concerned in any of the conferences and synods held there. In the numerous declarations and resolutions issued at the conferences and synods, much emphasis was laid upon the ethical character of Judaism and its progressive nature, but there was no repudiation of the validity of the precepts except for modifications in the application of some of them. The only official abrogation of a large part of Biblical and Rabbinic laws was made later by the Reform party in the United States at its Pittsburgh Conference, in 1885.

Yet, the centrifugal spirit manifested in the utterance of Bendavid and Friedländer was prevalent in the Jewries of West-European countries, and, while it was never fully realized in life, it was re-

¹ For a detailed account of the rise and development of the Reform movement, consult David Philipson's "The Reform Movement in Judaism"; for the philosophy of the movement, see below Ch. IX.

flected to a great extent in the literature of the period. The manifestations of that spirit were revealed in several tendencies. The first was a tendency to minimize the extent of Jewish life and narrow down its scope, for with the abolition of the necessity for observing the numerous precepts and injunctions which affect the daily conduct of the Jew, it lost its distinct and separate form. It was then limited to the maintaining of a form of a public worship which in no way affected the individual in the home and in society. The second tendency was to spiritualize Judaism and emphasize mainly its ethical content as the only constant part in it, while considering the purely religious and practical precepts as temporal and transitory, subject to change in every generation. The third was the endeavor to separate Judaism into two distinct elements, the religious and the national, and declare that only the religious, which in this case connoted primarily the ethical plus some fundamental beliefs, has validity, while the national was obsolete. This last tendency was more clearly expressed and received official confirmation in repeated declarations that the Jews do not constitute a nation but are only religious communities in the various countries of their sojourn. This last manifestation of the centrifugal movement precipitated, of course, a greater and more severe strife in Jewry than the other two. A nation that had existed in a state of exile for two millennia as a unified people and was regarded as such by the outside world and by itself could not be divested of this fundamental character by mere declarations and resolutions. Still, the theory was insistently repeated. Subsequent events have justified the views of the opponents of this theory, and in our own day it is tacitly being relinquished even by many of the adherents of Reform Judaism.

These tendencies in life had, of course, their effect upon the literary productivity of the age. If Hebrew was even forced out of the synagogue or reduced to a minimum, for the substitution of German prayers was one of the achievements of the Reformation, it follows that it ceased almost entirely to serve as a vehicle of literary expression. With the exception of a few polemic pamphlets against the Reform movement, the number of Hebrew books written in Germany during the period was very small. Still the centrifugal movement had also a positive result, a very beneficial one. It was indirectly responsible for the creation of a vast literature in German and also in other languages dealing with Jewish history, literature, philosophy, and all other expressions of the Jewish spirit during the ages which,

for want of a better name, we designate by the name of "Jewish Science." We said "indirectly" for the reason that it cannot be stated that a movement to transform Jewish life into that indefinable aerial type with the weekly temple service as its content was the immediate cause for the rise of the magnificent literature. In fact, there were several causes which called forth the intellectual productivity. Some there were among the champions of the Reformation, who, wanting to justify their views, delved into the Jewish past, and from the arsenal of Jewish literature and thought forged their weapons to defend their intended innovations. Others there were, who, opposing these very innovations, went to the same arsenal and obtained their implements of attack. Still others, disappointed both with the old type of traditional Judaism and with the Reformation, sought satisfaction in the glorious past of their people.

The most potent cause for the rise of "Jewish Science," however, was the emptiness created in Jewish life by that very centrifugal movement. The life of a Jewry, like that of Germany, which had a tradition of over a thousand years of learning and intense piety, could not be emptied of its content entirely in the course of a few decades. No matter how the changed environment militated against the old form of Jewish life, that life could not be forced into the narrow limits of occasional services and sermons about the eternal ethical verities of Judaism. When Rabbinic learning was gone, when the daily practices of Judaism fell into abeyance, a chasm which had to be filled yawned before the chosen spirits in Jewry. It was then that they turned to "Jewish Science," to multifarious studies in history, literature, philosophy, theology, and similar fields. It was, in a way, the old desire for Torah, the passion for learning which animated that Jewry for ages which reasserted itself again. It was really the old Rabbinic learning parading in a modernized form.

The centrifugal movement then indirectly contributed much to the rise of the multifarious literature known as "Jewish Science." And, likewise, indirectly through this literature, it checked its own progress and caused the beginning of a reverse movement, a centripetal one. When the treasures of Jewish literature began to be laid open, when Jewish history began to unfold itself through the labors of the scholars, when Jewish thought began to be expounded, and Jewish poetry to be interpreted, a new conception of Jews and Judaism began to form in the minds of the younger generation. A new dignity and pride arose in their hearts, and ultimately love

not only for their religion in its ethical aspect, but also for their people began to sprout. Slowly it began to dawn upon the minds of some, that perhaps after all the Jews were a nation, for did not their grand history show their remarkable unity in all countries throughout the ages? It was then that the spirit was reversed even in the West, in the late sixties and early seventies, towards a centralized and more complete Jewish life.

We have already indicated above that the centrifugal spirit during the greater part of the period was only prevalent but not dominant. Side by side with this main current there flowed currents of an opposite tendency, which gathered strength and, in their turn, helped to check the centrifugal movement and reverse it. In fact, just as the Reformation was one of the causes of the rise of "Jewish Science," so it also stimulated the development of other currents of thought which arose as a reaction against its extreme tendency. The most important current was the one of a moderate Orthodoxy, later known as Conservatism.

Orthodoxy of the standard type during the forties of the last century, when the Reform movement reached its height, was almost powerless. Its leaders, who, as a rule, were not trained in secular studies, were unable to cope with the situation. But then there arose a valiant champion of traditional Judaism, Zechariah Frankel (see below), a man who combined both great Talmudic learning and wide secular erudition, and he set in motion a new movement which aimed to preserve all that is good in traditional Judaism in the best sense of the word, and at the same time to introduce some changes in order to reconcile it with the modern spirit. He fought valiantly against the centrifugal movement in a series of speeches, pamphlets, and articles.*

He was not alone in his endeavors but was aided by other scholars and leaders, such as Rapoport and others, who hailed from the Eastern countries but whose influence extended to the West. In time, the number of scholars and rabbis who followed this path of modernized traditional Judaism grew and their influence extended, and thus a movement arose which could measure in force with that of the centrifugal one. The result of this spiritual current was that a greater interest in Hebrew literature was stimulated and an impetus was given to productivity in Hebrew. Frankel himself wrote several of his most important scientific works in Hebrew.

* For his views see below Sec. 67.

Even the more rigid type of Orthodoxy was to a certain degree revitalized and it regained part of its losses. It ultimately found its leader in Samson Raphael Hirsch (see below), a man of great piety and considerable Jewish learning, who also commanded a wide secular knowledge. Unlike Frankel, however, he denied the need for any changes in Judaism insisting that the Jews, not Judaism, needed to be reformed and re-inspired with the pristine devotion to their religion so that they should observe the precepts and commandments at a sacrifice of comfort if necessary.

Owing to the remarkable energy of Hirsch, the Orthodox party became again an important factor in German Jewry, showing signs of strength and helping to change the spirit of the time. The old Orthodoxy was revived and dressed in modern garb, for it made peace with secular education and many other external forms of life.

It thus happened that in the seventies of the last century, the force of the centrifugal movement was almost spent, and a reverse current set in which aimed to extend and broaden Jewish life. Of course, Jewish life in the West was then as yet far from ideal. The changed environment and the newly-won freedom wrought havoc with the Jews of all factions. There was little spirit and warmth in the Judaism they professed, and the ideas of the Reformation which were fought for so valiantly only two decades before still held sway. But the tide had turned, and the beginning of a new movement, a centripetal one, became evident. Even nationalism began to reassert itself, not merely as a hazy idea of a religious philosophy, but as a distinct view of Jewish life. It was considered exotic, and its propounder, Moses Hess, was thought rather eccentric; but it was there, its roots began to germinate, and the way was prepared for a new period.

28. *THE EAST*

The vicissitudes and the various changes in the spirit of the time in the West noted by us in the preceding section were also in evidence in the East-European countries, but in a greatly modified form. In general, it can be said that only echoes of the centrifugal movement, which dominated the West for the larger part of the period, were heard in the East. The complete Jewish life, which the compact Jewish masses led in the two great centers of the Haskalah, Galicia and Russia, the fact that the Hebrew language was the literary language of all classes, even of those who opposed

the Haskalah, militated against such extreme manifestations of the spirit as were prevalent in the West. On the whole, the leaders of the Haskalah during the second period continued the tendency of the first men of enlightenment and strove to reconcile Jewish life with modern conditions, to modernize Jewish education, to introduce new values, and to transform the social and economic life of the people. But because of the changes in the environment of the Jews in the Eastern countries, which forced them willingly or unwillingly to adjust their lives to different conditions, and owing to the great spiritual upheavals in the West, the Maskilim became bolder in their demands and freer in their expressions. They were not satisfied with superficial changes in Jewish life, but demanded more thorough modifications. As a result, there arose also in the East a quasi-Reform movement which aimed both at innovation in the form of religious worship and at lightening the burden of the practice of the laws. At no time, however, was this movement characterized by a tendency to minimize the uniqueness of Jewish life and narrow it down to the limits of religious worship. Nor was the national unity of the people ever threatened, though the ethical content of Judaism was frequently emphasized. There could, of course, be no desire to legislate the use of Hebrew out of Jewish life or out of the synagogue, for on the contrary, the development of Hebrew literature in all its phases was one of the chief values which these leaders of Haskalah endeavored to introduce in place of some of the old values which they considered out of date.

Yet the Haskalah, in spite of all the limitations imposed upon it by the nature of Jewish environment, and in spite of its essentially positive character, bore some resemblance to the movement in the West, for it likewise fought against an established form of life, aiming to change its values and, to a large extent, its character. It was, therefore, a movement of struggle, and as all such movements, it was largely militant and polemical. Polemics, satire, and criticism are, as we will see, important features of its literature. Only towards the end of the period, the spirit changed, and, from a semi-polemical movement, it became a wholly positive and centripetal one. The reasons for this change will become obvious in the course of our survey.

There were two centers of the Haskalah movement during the second period: one in Galicia and the other in Russia. The types of Jewish life in both of these centers greatly resembled each other,

yet there was also a certain individuality to each of them, which was reflected in the development of the currents of the movement. Galicia, being in closer proximity to the West, was the first to be affected by the new movement. The Berlin Haskalah spread there early in the last century. The enlightened, as we have seen above in the case of Herz Homberg, who were immigrants from Germany and Bohemia and were imbued with the radical spirit of the West, attempted to force their type of enlightenment upon the Jewish masses with the help of the government. This created an antagonism on the part of the orthodox Jews, and especially on the part of the large Hassidic communities, who were particularly averse to any changes in their lives. This antagonism continued even when the leadership of the movement passed from the hand of outsiders to a group of native Galicians, who were endowed with wide and deep Jewish learning and were quite moderate in their demands. The representatives of rigid Orthodoxy and Hassidism saw in the least attempt to change the form of education or any other ways of life signs of danger and they declared those who desired to effect the changes heretics and destroyers of Judaism. The Maskilim, on their part, resented this attitude and, emboldened by the influence of the West and the help of the government, they drew together to give battle to their opponents. A polemic note was thus introduced at the beginning of the development of the Haskalah in Galicia. Their demands, however, never went beyond those of the first enlightened, and were limited to the modernization of Jewish education, widening its scope to include secular studies, change of the occupations of the Jew, and slight modifications in the external form of religious worship.

Conditions in Galicia, however, were such that the activities of the enlightened were limited in extent, and the Haskalah never became a popular movement. The government, after several attempts to modernize Jewish life by force, gave up the idea and reconciled itself to the existing situation, and, on the other hand, it took pride in the loyalty of the Jewish masses to the Hapsburg dynasty. There was then no particular incentive for the masses to change their way of life. The desire for emancipation was never strong with them, for they had never emerged from the spiritual ghetto, but succeeded by various means in adjusting themselves to a new environment without changing their way of life. When emancipation ultimately came in the middle of the last century, they enjoyed its

boon alike with their more enlightened brethren. Another factor in preventing the movement of the Haskalah from becoming a popular one was the strong hold of the H^assidim upon the Jewish masses in Galicia. This movement, no matter what inner kernels of beauty and depth of religiosity it might have possessed, in its external form was far from attractive and was essentially opposed to the modern spirit helping only to increase fanaticism and ignorance of all modern science. The leaders of the enlightenment, therefore, soon gave up hope of changing the life of the masses and a kind of truce was effected between the two parties. The orthodox Jews often yielded the leadership of the communities to the enlightened, but reserved for themselves the right to lead their own lives.

The result was a change in the Haskalah movement from the polemic to the constructive type of spiritual work. The leaders of the Haskalah in Galicia who, as stated, were men of great Jewish scholarship, turned to the study of the past and were among the builders of that mass of literature, known under its Hebrew name as *Hokmat Yisrael* (The Wisdom of Israel). They thus not only increased the treasure of Jewish culture and enriched the Hebrew literature, for their works were almost exclusively written in that language, but really created new values and exerted great influence on life. Gradually the views contained in these works spread and helped to create a new attitude towards Judaism, a more liberal one, but one of love and reverence for the people and tradition. There were heard, of course, echoes of the Reform movement in the West, and some scholars advocated drastic changes in religion. But these demands were on the whole, expressions of individuals and never developed into movements.

Life, though, gradually forced its changes upon the Jews and the new conditions made inroads in Galician Jewry continually. The new generation that arose in the second half of the last century was already emancipated from traditions without being imbued with Jewish knowledge, and an unconscious tendency for assimilation set in; as a result, the Haskalah, which was essentially a movement of reconciliation, slackened in that center. It never died down, however, and towards the end of the period, through the influence of the more developed and more firmly established Haskalah of Russia, it was imbued with a new spirit.

The vicissitudes of the spirit of Haskalah in Galicia were reflected in the literature it produced. The first epoch of that period was

marked by the rise of satire. It is to the credit of the Galician writers that they originated the Hebrew prose novel, for the satire in order to be effective had to be able to delineate the characters in a complete, though a grotesque, way. From satire they passed to the ordinary story with the same object in view, that is, to depict the life of the opponents to Haskalah in rather dark colors, while the champions of enlightenment were represented as the embodiment of virtue. The later epoch was primarily distinguished by works of a scholarly nature in various fields of literature, such as history, philosophy, and history of literature. Yet the current of belles-lettres never ceased flowing, and novels, short stories, and sketches of Jewish life appeared regularly.

The later tendency of the movement, which expressed itself in the researches of the Jewish spirit, also affected the poetry of the second period of Haskalah. At first, it followed in the ways of the singers of the Haskalah of the first period, devoting itself to the glorification of beauty, of nature, of pastoral life, and of love. Most of the productions, if not actual translations, were imitations of poems in other literatures, especially the German. But soon it acquired a more original spirit, taking as its theme the life and vicissitudes of the Jewish people, religious motives, and even lyrical moments of the life of the individual. Few of these poets reached great heights, but some, as Letteris (see below), and several others left their mark upon Hebrew literature.

The case was somewhat different with the second center of the Haskalah, Russia. This great Jewish settlement, however, cannot be measured by one standard, for while the type of Judaism dominant there was, on the whole, the strict traditional type, yet there were shades of differences in the relation to secular knowledge on the part of the Jews of different sections. There were, in fact, two centers of Haskalah in Russia proper, that of Kremenetz in Vohlynia, expressing itself in the activity of Isaac Baer Levinsohn, and that of Wilna in Lithuania. The character of the first resembled much that of the neighboring Galicia. Hassidism was dominant, and ignorance prevailed. The second was a more enlightened one. Lithuania was known for its Talmudic learning, and since the days of the Gaon (Sec. II), for its liberal attitude towards secular knowledge, at least in its practical phase, namely, the scientific one. Besides, on account of its proximity to Germany, the Lithuanian center was

more influenced by the Berlin type of Haskalah and was leavened by its tendencies.

As a result of these variations, we note also changes in the character of the early stirrings of the Haskalah movement, which began almost simultaneously in both places, in the late twenties of the last century. That of Volhynia was entirely defensive; Levinsohn, its central figure, merely endeavored to prove in his several works that secular knowledge is not antagonistic to tradition, and pleaded for the introduction of order and system in Jewish education and for some changes in the economic life of the Jews. In general, this type of Haskalah was entirely of a practical nature and was in accordance with the desires of the government, which at the time paid attention to the Jewish problem and made several half-hearted attempts to improve their appalling economic position.

The Haskalah in Lithuania was of a more aggressive nature. Following the tendencies of the Berlin type, it aimed not only to change the attitude of the Jews towards secular knowledge or their occupations, but really aimed to introduce new spiritual values, to widen the horizon of the Jew and bring him in greater harmony with the culture and civilization of the outside world. The rigid Orthodox party sensed the danger in the activities of the Maskilim, and opposition arose in their ranks. This in turn engendered a polemic tendency among the enlightened and gave rise to strife. Yet, in the first epoch, the polemic nature of the literature was not dominant. It was only in secret conclaves that the enlightened formed plans to combat the power of the rabbis and curb their dominance over the communities, but little was in evidence in the literature except occasional outbursts.

The situation was changed in the forties of the nineteenth century. At that time, the government took a hand in the secularization of Jewish life and elaborated plans to force modernization upon the Jews by police methods. Its motives were far from noble. Nicholas I, the Czar of Russia at the time, was not a friend of the Jews and still less of Judaism. He never intended to emancipate them even if they did become thoroughly secularized. The real motive was to force assimilation upon the Jews and possibly conversion. The planned modernization and the changes in the Jewish system of education by establishing separate Jewish public schools, where the children were supposed to get an elementary secular and Jewish

education, was only a step in a wide scheme to estrange the Jews from the traditions of their fathers and to bring them nearer to assimilation and ultimate conversion. It was for this reason that, while the great majority of the Jews remained in their former status deprived of elementary human rights, those who had a certain degree of secular education, mainly graduates from government schools, received definite privileges. The government, though, worked cautiously and utilized the enlightened as instruments in its plan. These did not penetrate the depth of the intentions of the government and supported its plans. Emboldened by the help of the government, the Maskilim became more aggressive and openly undertook to change Jewish life in accordance with their ideas. They were then able to display their opposition against the rabbis of the traditional type, and, when the government opened the Rabbinical schools in the year 1847, the Maskilim considered the act an important event. It was during this epoch that the Haskalah movement in Lithuania, which was now the dominant current, assumed a unified form and displayed some of the characteristics of the centrifugal spirit of the West. Hope was kindled in the hearts of the enlightened that the modernization of Jewish life would ultimately bring a change in their political status, and some of them began to consider the Haskalah movement merely as a means for the emancipation of the Jews and not as an effort towards the regeneration of Jewish life on the basis of its traditions and national spirit.

These hopes, however, were nipped in the bud and the aspirations of the Maskilim were blighted early in the fifties. The intentions of the government became more evident and a reaction set in. A turn toward a more positive constructive tendency in the Haskalah then set in. But again, there came a change in Jewish life. In 1855 Nicholas died and on his throne there ascended Alexander II, a liberal monarch, and from the early sixties a new wind of liberalism began to blow in the Russian Empire. The policy towards the Jew was reversed, some of the restrictions were removed, and several of the discriminations were abolished. The hope of emancipation was revived, and modernization and the spread of secular knowledge received a fresh impetus. The Maskilim, who meanwhile became a strong party owing to their own activity and to the slow but constant penetration of the modern spirit through the walls of the ghetto, became emboldened and demanded once more drastic changes

in Jewish life, and the echoes of the Reform movement in Germany reverberated in the East. The Haskalah movement then became militant, and dared to insist upon modifications in the practices of the Jewish religion. Of course, there was nothing in this tendency that resembled closely the Reform movement in the West, for the changes asked for were comparatively slight, but the importance consisted more in the attitude than in the actual demands. And for more than a decade, through the sixties and the early seventies, the question of reforms in religious practices, (Tikkunim be-Dat) was a leading factor in the Haskalah movement. This tendency on the part of the Maskilim aroused great opposition from the Orthodox and a strife between the two broke out, in which the champions of Haskalah now became the aggressors.

But even the newly-rekindled hope was soon blighted for a reaction set in again in the policy of the government towards the Jews in the middle of the seventies. Consequently, the realization of the hope for emancipation seemed as far off as ever. Added to this, the leaders of the Haskalah began to realize that the need to strengthen Judaism and attract the rising generation back to the fold was greater than to inaugurate reforms in the Jewish religion. They recognized that the impetus for assimilating Jewish life to the general one which was stimulated both by the currents in the Haskalah movement and by the liberal policy of the government during the reign of Alexander II, was not a salutary one. The young men who rushed to acquire general education in the government schools became gradually estranged both from Judaism and from the Jewish people. They were swept away by the current of ideas which were fermenting at the time in the intellectual stratum of the Russian people, especially among the university students. Some became Russianized and devoted their energies to the glorification of the Russian genius, and some were attracted by the nihilistic and socialistic ideals which were in vogue in certain circles; but almost all of them were disinterested in the fate of their own brethren, whose mode of life they despised and whose problems they considered insignificant and unworthy of their attention. These Russianized Jewish intellectuals were, however, in spite of their aspirations, subjected to many of the restrictions imposed upon the rest of their brethren, and, as a result, they sought, either to be free to follow the pursuit of their ideals or for personal preferment, the usual means of escaping Judaism with all it entails, namely,

conversion. Thus a movement of conversion, though on a much smaller scale than the one which had prevailed in Germany at the beginning of the last century, set in.

All these events and stirrings did not escape the writers and leaders of the Haskalah movement, and the tendency was changed. The struggle with the Orthodox for reforms in the religious practices ceased, and new tendencies arose which aimed to strengthen the Jewish spirit and intensify Jewish life. The results of this intense centripetal movement did not become evident either in life or in literature until the following period, but the turn in that direction was already made in the last days of the Haskalah movement.

In delineating the general course of the Haskalah movement in both of its centers, Galicia and Russia, and noting the gravitations of the movement in the latter country towards a centrifugal tendency, we must guard ourselves against overestimating the extent of the gravitation. At no time was the Haskalah movement in Russia negative in character, notwithstanding the inclinations and sentiments of individual or even small groups of writers. On the contrary, it was essentially positive and constructive. It not only proved to have been so by the larger part of the mass of literature it produced, but it could not be otherwise by the conditions of the environment in which it arose and acted. Russian Jewry, the largest of all Jewries in those days, lived mostly in compact masses in cities, and Jewish life was completely saturated with piety and learning, especially in Lithuania, where the Haskalah had its center. In that part of the country, Hassidism had little sway, and even where it gained a footing, as in White Russia, it was of the more exalted type, that of the *Habad* (see Sec. 8), free from the vices of the type which prevailed in the Ukraine and Galicia. True, the dominance of the rabbis was at times severe and the rigid and uncompromising piety permeating Jewish life had many defects. Still, the masses of that Jewry were far from ignorant. Hebrew was, like in Galicia, the literary language of that Jewry. The Maskilim, who received the best education and were saturated with Jewish learning, Talmudic as well as Biblical, were part of the people, lived among them, and conducted themselves mostly in the traditional manner. It is true that they wanted to harmonize Jewish life with the general one, to improve and beautify it, to rectify its defects, to widen its horizon and urge the Jewish masses to engage in more productive occupations. But in no wise did they intend to minimize Jewish life and narrow it

down to certain limits. Nor did they, on the whole, use Hebrew as the means for persuading the people to acquire the general culture and not as an aim in itself. They had a large reading public, and for a long time did not doubt but that their public would increase.² They loved the Hebrew language, though, in their naïveté and with the enthusiasm of people who are suddenly introduced to a new world, they showed undue reverence for other languages and literatures, especially German. They could not, however, foresee the remarkable process which took place in our own days, namely of Hebrew becoming a spoken language, for they believed that it would remain merely a literary one.

These Maskilim wanted to introduce values of general culture into Jewish life, and they succeeded to a great extent. They did it with skill and ability, and, being saturated with the Jewish spirit, they employed Jewish themes and Jewish subjects for that purpose and not merely translations or themes borrowed from foreign languages dressed in Hebrew garb, as many German Maskilim had done. It is true that in the time of the militant Haskalah, attacks were made by writers upon some forms of traditional life and distorted pictures were often drawn of the life of the pious Jews, not to mention the severe polemics against the narrow-mindedness of the rabbis. But these were mainly actuated by the heat of the strife and the desire to insure victory. In the same works much love for the Torah was displayed. Even the belligerent Maskilim would have been shocked at a Jewish life devoid of learning and tradition.³ The line of demarkation between the second Haskalah period and the following nationalistic one consists primarily in the emphasis upon values. The leaders of the Haskalah movement emphasized in their writings the acquisition of general cultural values, while the writers of the later period stressed the national and Jewish. But this is no gauge of the intensity of the Jewishness of the writers. The difference was primarily due to the exigencies of the time. The completeness of Jewish life in the Haskalah period precluded emphasis on Jewish values, while, on the other hand, the vacuity of that life in the later period necessitated the emphasis on Jewish values. To sum up, the Haskalah movement, as manifested in Galicia and Russia, in spite of minor currents and deviations, was of a

² The poet, J. L. Gordon in his poem *Lemi Ani Omel*.

³ Cf. for instance the poet J. L. Gordon's remarks in his autobiography where he demands that shoḥtim and rabbis should be engaged for the Jewish settlements in Argentine. *'Al Neḥar Kebar*, p. 184.

positive and constructive character, and the deposit it left in the form of the literature it produced was a fertile one and constituted an important factor in inaugurating the movements of the succeeding national period.

The vicissitudes of the spirit of the Haskalah movement in Russia were reflected in the literature, which is varied and colorful. In the South, literature first expressed itself, as noted, by a number of works of a publicistic nature but with a historical background which aimed to defend the tendencies of the Haskalah. Later, it followed the current of the general Haskalah literature. In Lithuania, where the Haskalah aimed to introduce new values into Jewish life, poetry flourished and the prose novel made its appearance, both the original and translated. Together with these literary expressions, a number of books were produced which intended to widen the horizon of Jewish life, such as works on general history, geography, and popular science. Most of these were translations from the German, but some were original. The novels were at first historical with a romantic trend. As the movement entered in its second epoch and became militant, its literature reflected more and more the conditions of contemporary life. Prose became gradually the leading form of literary expression. The novel depicted primarily the life of the ghetto and the struggle for enlightenment, and with the appearance of the periodicals, the essay became an important form of literature. Simultaneously, with the essay, literary criticism and the light humorous type of writing known as the *Feuilleton* began to develop. During this epoch, poetry also descended from the heights of the Parnassus and became polemical and satirical, participating in the struggle to change Jewish life and adjust it to the new environment. Yet, though both prose and poetry displayed a marked polemic tendency, they also served as the expression of the more ordinary phases of the life of the people. They depicted the poverty of the masses, deplored their suffering both in the past and present, praised its loyalty to the Torah and learning, and at times glorified its traditions.

The general characteristic of the Haskalah literature during the second epoch, which marks its most intense development, is that it was primarily a group literature, for the individual had not yet come into his own. The heroes in the novels are types rather than persons; the themes of the poems are either inanimate nature, the woes and problems of the nation, or certain phases of life in general

and of Jewish life in particular. The lyrical form, the expression of the soul of the individual, while not entirely absent, is not very prominent. The essay and the humorous and satirical writings are entirely devoted to the life and problems of the group.

This particular characteristic corresponded, on the whole, with the dominant spirit of the entire European literature during the greater part of the nineteenth century. But although the individual began to attract attention during the early sixties, the echoes of that new tendency did not reach Hebrew literature until the beginning of the present century.

The literature of the Haskalah was thus of a well-ramified and diversified nature, which was close to life and reflected it in its manifold manifestations. Its influence on life was great and effective, for while it did not carry out its aims to the extent which the writers desired, it introduced some new human values into the life of the masses, and directly or indirectly strengthened some old Jewish values. We can safely assert that the opinion oft-repeated in certain circles that the Haskalah was a negative movement in Jewry is entirely unjustified. At a distance of over a half a century, we are able to judge it more calmly, and we therefore say, notwithstanding some minor currents, that it was on the whole of a positive nature. The mass of literature it produced in Hebrew, much of which is of permanent value, is in itself a great contribution towards the regeneration of the Jewish spirit. The sentiments of loyalty to tradition, in spite of the desire to change some of its phases, of sympathy for the suffering of the people and the love of its ideals, and finally of love for the Hebrew language and admiration for its beauty, all these, formed important factors in stemming the centrifugal movement for assimilation which began to make its appearance in the Eastern Jewries in the seventies of the last century.

We shall now proceed to survey the various phases of that extensive literature during the period.

29. *THE GALICIAN CENTER*

As has been noted, the tendency of the Haskalah in Galicia was primarily a practical one. The enlightened aimed to improve the daily life of their brethren both in its spiritual and economic phases. The poverty of the Jews of Galicia was great, their occupations being primarily petty commerce, inn-keeping, and sale of liquor. Handicraft was held in low esteem and manual labor was looked down

upon. The tailor, the shoemaker, the carpenter, and other craftsmen formed, in most of the communities, the lower strata of Jewish society, and seldom participated in the management of public affairs. That was left in the hands of the rich business men who were guided by the rabbis and the learned men of the community. The spiritual state was even worse. Galicia was a center of Hassidism and was ruled by many *Zaddikim* who apportioned the country among themselves, each possessing his special territory where his followers were numerous. These *Zaddikim* were fanatical and strove to maintain that fanaticism among their adherents. Most of the spiritual leaders amassed great wealth from the contributions of the faithful, while their disciples groveled in poverty. They endeavored to maintain their position and influence by extensive propaganda and various other means, some of which were not above reproach. Ignorance of secular and even of Jewish knowledge was quite prevalent among the masses, for Hassidism laid more stress upon religious enthusiasm than upon study. Jewish education was of the most antiquated kind and produced poor results.

True, there was a considerable number of *Mitnagdim* in Galicia, especially in the large cities, and many learned rabbis even in the smaller cities. But they were, in most cases, subjected to the jurisdiction of the *Zaddikim* and were afraid to express their opinions on the conduct of the Hassidim and their leaders. Besides, the *Mitnagdim* group, except for their love of Jewish learning, differed but little in their general attitude towards life from that of the Hassidim. The opposition of their rabbis to the new tendency of enlightenment was not less vigorous than that of the Hassidim, and like them, they utilized all means in the struggle against the Maskilim. Rabbi Jacob Orenstein, chief rabbi of Lemberg, a famous Talmudic scholar in his time, did not even hesitate to declare a *Herem* in the year 1816 against four of the leading men of enlightenment of his city, among whom were Solomon Judah Rapoport, the well-known scholar, and Isaac Erter, the satirist. It was with the desire to improve this life, eradicate its defects, and weaken the influence both of Hassidism and its leaders and that of the rabbis that the writers of Galicia produced their literary works.

It is for this reason that the strength of the Galician literature of this epoch lies in prose rather than in poetry. The prose literature of Galician Haskalah consists, as mentioned, of two currents, that of belles-lettres and essays on topics of the day on the one hand, and

historical researches and essays on philosophy, literature, and kindred subjects, on the other hand. Of the great contributions to Jewish knowledge by the Galician scholars, we shall have much to say later. For the present, our survey is limited to the first literary current.

A few words must be said about the form of this literature. The Galician writers developed a special form for their literary expressions, namely that of correspondence. A great part of the historical literature was written in the form of letters exchanged between scholars. One of the most important annuals devoted to Jewish studies, the *Kerem Hemed*, which appeared for nine years, consists entirely of letters either exchanged between scholars or written to the editor. The same form was also used in some of the novels and the satirical writings. Visions and dreams are other devices used by the authors. Such ways of expression were best adapted to the character of the works, for they were of a polemic nature, and the most effective polemic is that of satire and biting humor. The writers, therefore, found it more convenient to direct their shafts of satire through the medium of letters exchanged between various people and through visions and dreams than through any other literary manner. These devices gave a certain objectivity to the ideas conveyed and enabled the authors to express their views more freely.

30. JOSEPH PERL

The first of the satirists who attempted to depict the life of the Jews of Galicia, and especially that of the *Hassidim* in a ludicrous way but with the intention of improving it was Joseph Perl (1773-1839). Perl was born in Tarnopol, one of the larger cities of Galicia and spent his entire life in that community, devoting himself both to the spread of enlightenment in his own community and other cities and to literature. He was a man of an extensive education and possessed great influence in government circles and also a certain amount of wealth. These qualities enabled him to become the leader of the Haskalah movement in Galicia and he acted as the patron of all Maskilim, affording them protection against the wrath of the fanatics, and very often giving them support of a material nature. He founded a modern school in Tarnopol, which he directed, and was also instrumental in establishing a synagogue where the religious service was beautified and preaching in German was introduced. Perl was close in spirit to Israel Jacobson, the initiator of the Reformation in Germany, and would have liked to initiate a similar move-

ment in Galicia. But the conditions in his country were altogether different; besides, his knowledge of Jewish law and his love for his people prevented him from being satisfied with meaningless reforms. He, therefore, endeavored to change the life of his brethren by means of a more effective weapon, the literary satire, and for this purpose he wrote two works, the *Megalē Temirin* (The Revealer of Secrets) and *Bohan Zaddik* (The Test of the Righteous).

The first is a quasi-novel consisting of a series of letters exchanged between secretaries of two *Zaddikim* and their friends, and an introduction supposed to have been written by a pious and zealous Ḥassid, Obadiah ben Petaḥia. The correspondence reveals a picture of the life of the *Zaddikim* and the devices used by them and their assistants in order to strengthen their influence and their hold upon the people.

Perl took as his model the famous book written at the rise of the Humanistic movement in Germany, the *Epistolae Obscurorum Viro-rum* (The Letters of Obscure Men). The book was composed by Crotus Rubianus, the friend of Johannes Reuchlin, and published by him in 1515 for the purpose of defending Reuchlin against the Dominicans by whom he was persecuted for championing the cause of the Talmud. It ridiculed the religious bigots by exposing their ignorance through writings which were supposed to have emanated from their associates. At the time, it created a strong impression and helped to vindicate Reuchlin. Perl adopted the same device, and added to it a fantastic Ḥassidic setting.

In the introduction Obadiah relates that while traveling at night through a forest on his way from Medzhibozh to Zuawonitz, cities famed in Ḥassidic lore, he was suddenly approached by an old man. The man told him that he is the custodian of the secret writings of the *Zaddik* Rabbi Adam, which, according to Ḥassidic legend, the *Besht* had locked up in a rock, and he offered to give him a part of these papers. He further informed him that this part of the sacred writings would make him invisible and that he would be carried by a cloud, if he so desired, wherever he chose to go. Obadiah then tells us that by utilizing this means of invisibility, he visited many courts of *Zaddikim*, read their correspondence, and for the sake of "glorification" of Ḥassidism which is the aim of his life, he copied the letters and published them. The letters then follow.

These letters are written in the barbaric style of the Ḥassidic Hebrew interspersed with many jargon words. They carry a connected story or rather a double story of the doings in the "courts" of the

two leading *Zaddikim* in Galicia. The picture of the life reflected there is an appalling one. It is grossly exaggerated, but undoubtedly contains some truth. The *Zaddikim* and their assistants, especially the latter, are represented as men who are ready to commit every crime in order to strengthen the movement and the belief in the efficacy of the miraculous powers of the leaders. All means are legitimate in the war against their opponents. The faithful falsely accuse honest men of crimes in order to cause their downfall. They steal and commit perjury, and even immorality is not unknown among them. To make the picture more realistic, citations from books written by famous leaders of Hassidism are given, where, by means of distorted homiletics, justification for dubious action is advanced, provided they tend to increase the power of the sect.

It is undoubtedly a vituperous diatribe against Hassidism, but we must confess a skillful one. The *Megalē Temirin* reads like a sensational novel. The numerous incidents are woven into a connected story which thrills us by its surprises and unexpected turn of events. It ends with the flight of one of the *Zaddikim* from the country in order to escape the hand of justice, and the sudden death of the other who is thus saved from a similar fate. This work is primarily devoted to the battle with Hassidism, but the rabbis also come in for severe criticism. They are especially upbraided for their duplicity, as many of them are in reality opponents of the sect, but for fear of losing the favor of the leaders, they pass as ardent Hassidim.

The *Bohan Zaddik* is a sequel to the *Megalē Temirin*. It is written in the same form as the first book, namely as a series of letters between Obadiah and his friends. The setting is as follows: Moses Umaner, a friend of Obadiah, urges him to utilize the miraculous power of invisibility with which the possession of the fragment of secret writing endows him, and travel in the world in order to gather the opinions of men regarding his *Megalē Temirin*. Obadiah follows his advice, and by the use of certain mystical devices, he gains possession of a wonderful tablet on which the words of conversations overheard by the bearer inscribe themselves automatically; when the pages are filled the writing can be erased by the breath of a truly honest man. Obadiah, thus armed, goes out into the world to learn the opinions of men, and also to search for a truly honest man. He thus becomes a modern Diogenes. Before his departure, he engages two scribes to copy the words on the tablet ere they are erased by the miraculous device. A small part of the book contains

the contents of conversations heard by Obadiah about his *Megalē Temirin*, but the larger part consists of an account of his ceaseless efforts to discover the desired person, and it is this report which engages our interest.

Obadiah traveled far and wide, first visiting the leading *Zaddikim* of Galicia, asking them to breathe on the tablet; he then turned to the business men, men of enlightenment, and craftsmen, but to no avail. All attempts by men of different stations in life to erase the written words by their breath were in vain. In despair, he crossed into Russia and there he repeated his experiment, but again without success. Finally, he wandered into the newly-founded Jewish agricultural colonies in the South of Russia, and there among the tillers of the soil, he found men who could perform the task, which conclusively proved their honesty and integrity. Obadiah then changes his views of life, becomes an opponent of Ḥassidism, and he devotes himself to the work of improving the conditions among his brethren. He feels that they must abandon their fanaticism, their aversion to handicraft, their rather flimsy and petty businesses, and follow other ways of life. He is especially interested in the promotion of agriculture among the Jews. In all this, there speaks Perl, the practical Maskil, whose ambition, like that of all of his associates, was to improve not only the spiritual life of his brethren but also their social and economic. Attempts were made by these Galician Maskilim to found societies for the promotion of agriculture among the Jews, but as many other such attempts, they met with little success.

In the criticism of the various strata of Galician Jewry, the Ḥassidim and their leaders, the *Zaddikim*, come first. Not only is their fanaticism and their dubious means of increasing their influence condemned, but they are also severely reproached for the luxury of their "courts" and their greed of money. The rabbis, especially those of the larger cities come next. They are rebuked for their flattery, their duplicity in dealing with the various factions in their communities, and also for their life of opulence. But even the captains of commerce do not escape the sting of the author and their business methods are severely criticized. Perl is especially severe with inn-keepers and dispensers of liquors—one of the widely spread occupations among the Jews of Galicia. He lays many charges at their door and pictures them in rather dark colors. Even the craftsmen come in for their share of reproach; he reprimands them for their lack of honesty which presents

complete digression from the ideal type of the worker portrayed in the Talmud.

The picture we obtain in this book of Jewish life in Galicia in the early thirties of the last century is undoubtedly a gloomy one. The mirror of Perl is not only a magnifying glass, but also distorts the reflection. Even the author himself was frightened at the description and found it necessary to append a note telling us that the life of the Jews is not as bad as presented and that there are many men of integrity among them, but that Obadiah met only the other types. He adds that his purpose was to show how far the Jews, for various reasons, have strayed from the path of life of their ancestors.⁴

In the setting of the plot where Obadiah is made the wandering and keen observer, it is possible that Perl was influenced by Al-Harisi's *Tahkemoni* (Vol. I, Sec. 204), where we find such a character who, though more interested in literary and poetic contests, does not fail to make his observations upon the life of the Jews in the countries he visited. But on the other hand, he might also have been influenced by the contemporary German Romantic literature where similar wonder stories are found.

The style of the *Bohan Zaddik* is much more elevated than that of the *Megalê Temirin*, for no attempt is made to imitate the writing of the Hassidim. However, it is still in keeping with the character of Obadiah and is of a conversational nature except in passages where the author turns publicist, in which he uses a terse prose. Perl, though, was no master of style. This was left for another contemporary artist.

31. ISAAC ERTER

The distinguished satirist of the time who endeavored to improve the life of the Jews of Galicia by his withering ridicule of their defects was Isaac Erter (1792-1851). He was born in a small village near the city of Przemyśl and received the customary Talmudic education and while still young had already acquired local fame as a master of Rabbinic lore. In the manner of the time, he married very early at the age of thirteen, and upon the death of his wife within six months after the wedding, he remarried. Soon after his second marriage, he was initiated by a friend, Abraham Goldberg, in the ways of enlightenment, and young Erter applied himself to the mastery of the Bible,

⁴ *Bohan Zaddik*, ed. Prague, 1838. p. 81.

the Hebrew language, and secular studies with great assiduity. In the year 1816, he settled at Lemberg where he associated with Rapoport and other Maskilim of the day, occupying himself as a private teacher. Together with them, he was in the same year excommunicated by Rabbi Jacob Orenstein, which act caused him great suffering, for many parents refused to engage him as instructor for their children. The incident engendered in his soul a bitterness against the fanatical rabbis to which he gave vent in his writings.

He then left Lemberg and for a time served as teacher in Perl's modern Hebrew school at Tarnopol, but ultimately settled in the city of Brody where he was befriended by the renowned scholar, Naḥman Krochmal and other liberals. At first, he continued as private instructor, and for a short time, he also taught in the newly-founded modern school of that city. However, at the age of thirty-five he decided to turn to a more lucrative profession, whereupon he left his home and went to Budapest to study medicine returning after five years to Brody where henceforth he practiced his profession.

Occupied with his practice and with various communal activities, Erter devoted little time to writing and consequently the number of his essays are few. They were originally published in the various periodicals of the day but were later collected in a small volume and published posthumously in the year 1856 under the title *ha-Zofeh le-Bet-Yisrael* (The Watchman of the House of Israel). This slender volume, however, outweighs many bulky tomes of other writers of the epoch, for not only is it permeated by a spirit of earnestness wherein the very soul of his people is revealed, but is distinguished by a mastery of style and loftiness of thought.

The very name *Zofeh* (Watchman), which Erter appropriated for himself, indicates both the attitude of the author towards his work and the character of his writings. Erter, though disclaiming in his short preface his pretension to the title of prophet, yet considers himself akin to that company of illustrious seers who chastised their people for their evil ways and the House of Jacob for their sins. "True," says he, "God has never appeared to me, but when I contemplate the world, its orderly laws, and its vicissitudes, there flutters before my eyes the image of God, and inspired with His goodness and wisdom my heart moves my hand to take hold of the pen in order to teach my people the way of life."⁵ It is this feeling of kinship with the prophets and his strong love for his brethren that made Erter

⁵ *ha-Zofeh*, p. 2.

so dauntless and bold in his utterances and so earnest and serious. His satire is of the heavy and cumbersome type, and possesses little of the lightness of the man whose observant and roving eye flutters over life and detects its ridiculous features, the incongruity of human actions, their foibles and pettiness and exposes them before us in an off-hand and objective manner which arouses our risibility. Nor is it distinguished by scintillating epigrams and expressions. It is the satire of the warrior, of one who struggles for truth and light, who expresses his hatred for all forces of darkness and superstition which impede their progress. The writer is not an objective onlooker, but participates in the woes and miseries of the people whom he satirizes and at the same time even attempts to defend them understanding the causes for the very conduct he decries. He believes their erroneous way of life to be only a temporary aberration and calls to his people to return to their pure tradition and to the ways trodden by so many illustrious men. The satirical element in Erter's writings consists primarily in the grotesqueness of the pictures he draws and the lurid colors in which they are drawn. There is undoubtedly much exaggeration in them but also an element of truth.

Erter devotes much space to ridiculing the ways of the Ḥassidim, but unlike Perl, he does not concentrate upon them. His satire embraces all classes of Jewry. He is very severe with the rabbis of the *Mitnagdim* who are no less zealous in their opposition to enlightenment than the *Zaddikim*, and even the enlightened themselves, the so-called modern Jews, do not escape his criticism. He is not blind to their faults, to their estrangement from their people, their materialism, selfishness, and egoism. He chastises especially the Jewish physicians of his time, his colleagues, and exposes their ignorance and greed. The very champions of the Haskalah, the Hebrew writers and poets, receive their share of castigation. He also differs from Perl in that he touches little upon the economic problems of Galician Jewry, though he was no less zealous in their solution and wrote an appeal for the Society of the Promotion of Agriculture among the Jews. He devoted himself almost entirely to the portrayal of the evils and defects of the spiritual and moral life in all its phases.

The kinship he felt with the prophetic spirit also prompted Erter to adopt their peculiar form of literary expression, that of visions and dreams. Most of his essays are in the form of dialogues between him and a spirit which appears to him. At one time, it is the spirit of the Hebrew language; at another, the spirits of Ḥassidism and

knowledge; at still another, it is *Samael* or Satan himself who converses with him. His first literary attempt, which consists of a few pages but is distinguished by a brilliancy even surpassing his other writings, was the *Mosnē Mishkal* (The Scales). In it the author endeavors to place before the reader a transvaluation of values in life in general and in literature in particular. In his dream, the author relates, he saw a golden scale and a large number of weights. The weights bore inscriptions, denoting both various qualities of the soul and states of human life, such as wisdom, wealth, satisfaction in life, true belief, superstition, and others. He began to experiment with the weights. Placing wealth and wisdom on the scale first, he found that wisdom was much heavier than wealth when weighed in a true scale. He then tried wealth and satisfaction in life, and the latter outweighed the former. Stinginess and want were then weighed and they balanced each other. He finally found a weight on which the word "suffering" was inscribed on one side, and the words "striving for truth" on the other. This weight was very heavy. This short remark indicates the author's appreciation of his role. To tell the truth entails suffering, but is of great value nevertheless.

Besides these weights, many books were scattered around the scales, books written during the ages by famous rabbis and Kabbalists and by non-Jewish scholars. The author then weighed various books, and to his great surprise found many a bulky tome weighing only as little as a small pamphlet and sometimes even less. But still greater surprises were in store for him, for he found that some books by famous Kabbalists and leading *Zaddikim* weighed only as much as some treatises by pagan priests and impostors. Moreover, to his great astonishment he saw, while placing the books on the scale, a mysterious hand appear and tear pages and chapters from the books and insert them in books written by others. These were parts of *Responsa* and other Rabbinic works which were copied by the writers from books of others without naming their sources. They were then restored to their rightful owners. There was one particular volume of *Responsa* from which the mysterious hand tore out the entire contents and left only the title page. Erter hints quite openly that the book was that of Rabbi Jacob Orenstein of Lemberg, the very one who issued the decree of excommunication against him and his friends. He thus revenged himself upon him for his extreme fanaticism.

This brilliant but comparatively mild attack against the fanaticism, plagiarism, false learning of the rabbis, and the superstitious teachings

of the Ḥassidic leaders was followed by a more severe and detailed criticism of the lives and deeds of these two classes of leaders in Jewry, and also of other types of Jews, including that of the modern Jew which is contained in the vision called *Tashlik*. The vision appears before him on New Years day during the performance of the *Tashlik* ceremony by the Jews which takes place on the banks of a river. The author, while offering his prayer together with his brethren, sees the archfiend, *Samael*, together with a host of devils, standing on the shores of the river, busily engaged in fishing the sins of the Jews out of the water. A conversation between him and *Samael* develops. During the dialogue, the author presents before us an array of various sins which slip into the river from under the coats of the visitors. His attack is directed first against the rabbis; he sees their sins of hypocrisy, pride, and contempt for all Jews who are not Rabbinic scholars and their jealousy of each other. He even takes note of their literary sins, such as the use of plagiarism, indelicate language in certain Responsa, their casuistry, as well as their neglect to give their children a proper Jewish education. The *Zaddikim* come next for their share. He sees grave sins sliding from under their coat tails: deceit, falsehood, double-dealing, unholy zeal, and fanatical persecution of the enlightened, drunkenness, and even immorality. The other Jews are dealt with in a rather general manner. Finally, a modern Jew approaches the river, but he gets off rather lightly. The author sees a block of ice sliding from under his coat, symbolizing his indifference to the woes and miseries of his people, his aloofness, and his extreme egotism. The beauty of the dialogue is enhanced by a device used by Erter where he makes *Samael* act as the champion of the necessary reforms, and himself as the advocate of his pious brethren and their leaders. He thus creates the impression that excessive piety and fanaticism are grave sins even in the eyes of Satan.

A brief but very delightful satire is directed by Erter against the naive beliefs of the Ḥassidim in the holiness of their *Zaddikim* which is typified by the notion that every move of their *Zaddik* brings about the creation of an angel in heaven. This belief was also spread among the *Mitnagdim*, for it is written in the Kabbalistic books that by the performance of a *Mizwah*, an angel is created in heaven; but the Ḥassidim were especially addicted to it. The satire is written in the form of a complaint sent by three angels to the *Zofeh*, i.e. Erter. The angels, *Sani*, *Sansani*, and *Smangloff*, who are designated by the Kabbalists as the special guardians of newly-born infants and their

mothers against the evil powers, complain that life in heaven has of late become uncomfortable on account of the newly-created angels. Formerly, the heavens were roomy and spacious; life was orderly, peace prevailed, and discipline was maintained. But since the *Zaddikim* took to the creation of angels in a wholesale manner by various devices, not the least of which is the pronouncing of benedictions at frequent quaffs of liquor, the heavens became crowded. But what is worse, these angels have no manners and show no respect for their elders, and discipline is entirely broken. Moreover, due to the quarrels of their creators, the *Zaddikim*, the angels also take to quarreling and fights frequently break out between hosts of angels and the proverbial peace of heaven is destroyed. They conclude with a plea to the author to tell his people to desist from creating angels and also from calling upon them too frequently for help against evil powers, as they are overburdened with work and cannot discharge their duties. In this satire, Erter ridicules not only the superstitious beliefs of the *Hassidim*, but also their actions and ways of life, and we have thus a double satire.

Erter's longest satire and probably the best is his *Gilgul Nefesh* (The Transmigration of a Soul). As may be seen from the title, the author uses as his vehicle of criticism and ridicule the doctrine of metempsychosis or transmigration of souls. It is a record of the various incarnations which the soul of a man assumed in a series of bodies of men, animals, fish, and birds. Its incarnation in the body of a man always occurred through the performance of a holy rite at the death of the animal, bird or fish.⁶ By this device, Erter was enabled to pass before us many types of men whom he wanted to ridicule. The soul lived at various times in the bodies of a *Hassid*, frog, cantor, fish, tax-farmer, Kabbalist, mole, grave-digger, dog, *Zaddik*, fox, physician, donkey, and several other forms. In this array of lives, there is a kind of balance of justice, for the life of each animal or bird typifies a certain characteristic of the life of each of the different men described. Thus, in its earliest life, the soul was an enthusiastic *Hassid* who jumped about while praying, danced and sang at festivals, and drank good measures of intoxicating liquors which was considered a means of "elevating the soul" and he therefore turned into a frog which drinks only water but croaks and jumps around. The frog turned

⁶ According to the later Kabbalists, the soul of a sinner residing in the bodies of creatures of the lower orders, is elevated into the body of a man at the moment a *Miswah* is performed at the death of the animal.

cantor, and as many a cantor, sang confused melodies without harmony often adopted from the songs of drunkards in taverns, but he pleased his ignorant audience. His next form was, therefore, that of a fish, dumb but rapacious, which feeds on the weak of its own kind. The fish turned into a farmer of the special taxes levied on the Sabbath candles and on *Kosher* meat,⁷ as rapacious as his prototype. The tax-farmer turned owl which lives in darkness, and the owl, Kabbalist who delves in dark secrets; the Kabbalist became a mole, and the mole, a grave-digger; and thus the series of fleeting pictures continue. Very interesting and delightful is the picture of the Jewish physician in his time. The soul assumed that form after it emerged from the body of the donkey. The ignorance of the physicians, their vanity, their deceptive devices to impress the people with their expert knowledge, and their greed are humorously drawn. The soul offers practical advice to the author who was a physician but an unsuccessful one; it is cast in aphorisms called after the manner of the aphorisms of Hippocrates—Golden Rules. It remarks that its maxims really deserve that name for they help the practitioner to obtain gold. Some deserve to be quoted. They read as follows: "Have your hair powdered so that you may appear wise in the eyes of thy beholders, for they will say, 'much study grayed his hair before his time.' Buy many books, have them bound in leather, their backs and edges gilt; place them in book-cases with glass doors and lock them forever. There is no need for reading them, but people will say thy wisdom is profound for thou possessest many beautiful books. Pawn thy clothing and buy horses; may the lender take thy pawn, but possess thyself of a carriage, for even if thou kill many patients people will still say, observing your dashing chariot, 'He is a great healer performing wonderful deeds.' If thou visitest a sick person, pronounce his doom, and say he will not live. If he die, people will say, 'Behold the physician foretold his end.' If he live, they will praise thee as one who restoreth life to those who were at the gates of death."⁸

Of his other two satirical visions, one deals with an old theme, the quarrel between superstition and enlightenment. It is expressed in the form of a dialogue between Hassidism and Wisdom who appear

⁷ The Austrian government introduced in Galicia early in the last century these special taxes apparently for the purpose of obtaining funds for the maintenance of Jewish schools. They weighed heavily upon the poor people who had to pay several pennies to the government for every candle and every piece of meat. The farmers of these taxes were hated by the masses.

⁸ *ha-Zofeh*, Ed. Warsaw, 1908, pp. 60-61.

to the author in the guise of two women. Each of them attempts to persuade him to follow her. Hassidism tries to win him on her side by promises of material good and popular honor which he will gain by deceiving people and by turning their ignorant beliefs to personal advantage. Wisdom, on the other hand, offers only spiritual satisfaction and points to the long line of great Jews in the past who followed her ways. In this manner, Erter attacks bitterly the fanatical life of the Hassidic leaders, exposing their hypocrisy, and displays the charms of enlightenment.

The theme of the second is devoted to a number of spiritual matters dealt with in a detailed manner, the progress of Hebrew literature, religious reforms, and Jewish education. It is a dialogue between the author and the spirit of the Hebrew language which appears to him in the guise of a venerable old woman. In the course of the dialogue, Erter criticizes the rabbis for not heeding the needs of the time, for not adjusting religion to existing conditions, and for their barbarous style. He also chastises the Hebrew poets of his time for following slavishly their German models, and the writers for not enriching their style by using the treasures found in the Talmudic and Mediaeval literature. Here he is not only critic but also proposes a number of improvements in various fields of life, outlines a program for higher Jewish education, and urges the necessity of historical research and of enriching the Hebrew style. He even advocates the establishment of an academy for the development of the Hebrew language. In all these teachings, Erter was much ahead of his time and saw into the distant future. In general, the positive value of this dialogue is much greater than its critical, as it is permeated with a spirit of love for the Jewish people and for Hebrew and contains a passionate appeal for the cultivation of that language which is the strongest bond between the scattered Jewries.

Much of Erter's satire has undoubtedly lost its force, for life itself has changed the environment of the Jew, yet it has not only historical interest but permanent literary value. Not only does it mirror, in an exaggerated but delightful manner, the life of the former generation, but some of its features still retain their strength. Though our lives have changed greatly from that of the time of Erter, we may still have with us several of his types in different guise, and we still need a transvaluation of values. The passion for truth permeating the writings of Erter may still inspire us.

32. MINOR WRITERS

Together with these two leaders of the Haskalah literature in Galicia there collaborated a number of other writers of lesser fame who contributed their share towards the development of modern Hebrew literature. A number of these were mentioned above (Sec. 25) in connection with the *Bikkurē ha-Ittim* as their literary productivity concentrated in the volumes of that periodical. Of the other prose writers, the most outstanding were Judah Leib Mises (d. 1831) and Samson Bloch (1784-1846). The first devoted himself to polemics. He was a man of wealth and of high social standing, and consequently was not afraid to express his liberal opinions openly. He championed the cause of enlightenment and even of reform with excessive zeal. He recast David Caro's *Tekumat ha-Rabbanim* (The Character of the Rabbis) and republished it with new additions in the year 1823 in Vienna. The book contains both a criticism of the rabbis of his time and an outline of the qualifications and duties of the ideal rabbi. These are: the possession of Jewish learning and of secular knowledge, mastery of the language of the country, and an ability to preach to the people on the principles of the Jewish religion and on moral conduct. He even considers it the duty of the rabbi to adjust religion to the needs of the time. These demands reflect, of course, the ideal of the Maskilim in their desire to change Jewish life. But while in his first book, Mises expresses himself rather mildly and does not point out how far the adjustment of religion to the conditions of the time should go, he attacks Rabbinic Judaism severely in a second work entitled *Kin'at ha-Emet* (The Zeal for Truth), and in addition supports his contention for reforms by doctored citations from the works of Mediaeval scholars and philosophers. This work aroused the ire not only of the Orthodox but even of the more conservative Maskilim of the time. Solomon Judah Rapoport rebuked Mises severely without naming him in his preface to the biography of Nathan of Rome and declared such a tendency injurious to Judaism.

Samson Bloch was born in a small town near Lemberg, and in his youth, came under the influence of Naḥman Krochmal, the leader of the Maskilim in Galicia. The two were devoted friends all their lives until death parted them. For a time, Bloch filled the position of corrector and proof-reader in the printing-house of Anton Schmid

at Vienna, a position made famous by several of its incumbents, and there he edited and published several Mediaeval classics and his translation of Menasseh ben Israel's *Vindiciae Judaearum* under the name of *Teshu'at Yisrael* (The Salvation of Israel). His main contribution to Haskalah literature is his *Shebilē-Olam* (The Paths of the World), a geography of the world in three parts. The third part, dealing with Europe, was never finished, for the constant changes that took place in the map of Europe during the first half of the last century prevented him from completing it. He also wrote on Jews in distant lands and translated Leopold Zunz's biography of Rashi into the Hebrew under the name of *Toldot Rashi*. There was little originality in all what Bloch wrote; still his books were widely read and very popular. They were a source of knowledge of world history and geography to thousands of Jews who knew no other language but Hebrew, especially to the students of the Yeshivot, to many of whom Bloch's works served as an introduction to secular knowledge. He is also to be noted for his style, which though Biblical, is yet plastic enough to express a historical narrative and scientific data in a clear manner.

Among the prose writers of that epoch, we must also mention Meir Letteris (1807-1871) who, though primarily a poet, displayed great activity also in other fields. He edited several periodicals, Luzzatto's allegorical drama, *Migdal 'Oz*, Joseph ha-Cohen's history of persecutions, *Emek ha-Bakah* (Vol. II, Sec. 130), and Abraham Ibn Ezra's *Sfat Yeter* with valuable notes and extensive introductions. He also published two collections of letters exchanged between various scholars and literary men of the time, one under the name of *Miktabim* (Letters), and the other entitled *Miktabē Benē Kedem* (Letters of the Children of the East). In addition, Letteris composed an introduction to the Bible, named *Hikrē Leb*, dealing mainly with the characterization of the spirit of the Bible, and his own autobiography entitled *Zikkaron ba-Sefer*.

The autobiography possesses considerable historical merit for the author includes in it also the biographies of his teachers and friends with whom he associated for many years, among them Nahman Krochmal, S. L. Rapoport, Isaac Eichel, Samson Bloch, and Ludwig August Frankl, the noted Jewish-German poet. We thus get glimpses of the lives of the most illustrious men of the time and light is thrown on their relations with their friends and associates. The

style of the work, though flowing, is yet encumbered by artificial ornamentation and the Biblical euphuistic *Melizah* of the day.

33. GALICIAN POETS

As was noted above, poetry played an important role in the literature of the epoch, for every writer considered it his duty to break out into song from time to time. Yet only a few among the many who aspired to the title of poet really deserved that name. Most of the poetry of that time possesses little originality and is entirely subjected to the spirit of German poetry, the poems being either translations or imitations of Schiller and other noted singers. Two men, however, strike an original note and at times rise to poetic heights; these are Aryē Leib Kinderfreund and Meir Letteris. In their poems, we begin to feel the particular Jewish note which expresses itself in a yearning for God or in giving voice to the plight of the nation.

Aryē Leib Kinderfreund (1787-1837) who lived the greater part of his life in Galicia though born in Zamosc, Poland, gave to the world only a small collection of poems called *Dibré Shir* (Words of Song), but he struck a new chord, a chord of deep religious feeling and an appreciation of nature. The work begins with an ode to God in blank verse where His manifest greatness, as revealed in the beauty of the world, is described and contrasted with the littleness of man. A poem containing an admonition to his soul to aspire to spiritual rather than to worldly splendor which is fleeting is likewise permeated with deep piety. Two cycles of poetry, one depicting rustic life at various periods of the day—morning, noon, evening, and night—and the other, the seasons of the year, evince both a mastery of style and an eye for the beauties of nature. The first cycle consists entirely of songs written in two word and the second in three word lines. A fine moral didactic poem is the one on the search for happiness, called *Mishkan ha-Simḥah* (The Dwelling of Joy). The poet presents to us an array of men in various stations of life: the rich, the strong, the wise, and the pleasure-seeker, all of whom search for happiness, but do not find it; and he comes to the conclusion that only the righteous and the pure of heart may find it. A few lighter poems, mostly in form of humorous epitaphs on physicians and nurses complete the volume. Kinderfreund also attempted to introduce a new meter into Hebrew poetry, namely that

of the accents instead of the one of the measured number of syllables then prevalent. He proposed to count the accented syllable long and the unaccented short, and then adopt the current forms of European verse. He, however, found it difficult to construct many poems in this meter.

A more prolific and greater poet was Meir Letteris. He tried his hand at all kinds of poetry, lyrics, ballads, epics, and dramas. He published several collections of poems, both original and translated, entitled *Dibrê-Shir*, *Ayelet ha-Shahar* (with reference to Psalm XXII, 1), *Tofes Kinor we-Ugob* (The Holder of the Violin and Harp), *Palgê Mayyim* (Streams of Water), and *Neginot Yisrael Ahar ha-Hurban* (Songs of Israel after the Destruction of the Temple). The last collection consists entirely of translations of poems by the Jewish-German poet, Ludwig August Frankl. The others contain both translations and original poems. Letteris translated many of Schiller's songs, the Hebrew Melodies of Byron and poems by other famous bards. His translations are very successful and read almost like original compositions.

In his own poetry, Letteris deviated from the trodden path of the poets of the Haskalah who sang of love and of the beauty of nature and introduced new notes, that of the national lyric and the historical ballad. The center of interest in his poetry is life, primarily the life of his nation and at times the life of the individual. Letteris inclined toward the sublime, and it is the grand moments in Jewish history and life that captivated him, especially the tragic note with which they are saturated. Of his many national and historical poems, the most stirring are *Moshe Al Har Nebo* (Moses on Mt. Nebo) and the *Yonah Homiah* (The Crying Dove). In the first, the poet pictures the tragedy of the great leader who, after a life of tribulation and sacrifice for his people whom he had led through all vicissitudes to the borders of the Promised Land, is doomed to die on foreign soil and not enter the desired land. Standing there on Mt. Nebo, the gray-headed shepherd of the nation gazes from a distance at the land of hope. At this moment of parting from his people, his life passes before him in review, both the scenes of glory and those of defeat. He is gripped by his own tragedy and mournfully exclaims:

Even a bird, as evening falls, finds rest
From its day's flight within its welcome nest.

The man who tends the vineyard, field or grove
Finds in his cottage comfort, joy and love,
Forgets his toil and wipes away his tear.

Alas, my evening finds no welcome refuge near.
I sink in waves of loneliness and fear.
There yonder lies my land, the glorious soil.
My wings are crushed with weariness of toil.
Forgotten from the heart as one long dead,
Here in the dust I'll find my peace instead;
My bones dispersed throughout the length and breadth
Of foreign soil, I'll sleep the sleep of death.

In the second poem, Letteris sings of the sorrow of his people, comparing it to a fluttering dove, driven from its nest and hunted by the birds of prey. The comparison is borrowed from the Agada and the motive of the dove was used by many poets of the Middle Ages. He revived it and in masterly style makes the dove utter its mournful notes:

Always in flight,
No place to alight,
From crag to crag,
I dare not lag.
The storm wind's moan
Drives me alone
Relentlessly,
Till lonely tree
Gives a brief moment's rest to me.

The dove searches for her beloved and calls upon him to return to her and rebuild their home. And the poet concludes the parable with the words:

And when my ear discerns the mournful note
Of weeping dove within her cote,
My soul knows well the ancient sigh—
It is the Daughter of my People's cry.

The song was very popular in its time and was set to music and sung at gatherings and assemblies for many years.

The same note of sorrow is also evident in his reflective poems on life in general. Very beautiful is his song *Galē ha-Mayyim* (The

Waves). It is written in two word lines and possesses a graceful rhythm. The poet draws a comparison between the ever-moving waves and the joys of life.

Says he:

They dance and they frolic,
The waves as they play.
They sparkle and glisten
With radiance of day.
Their crystal-like splendor
Is caught from the sky.
They break into white-caps
To gladden the eye.
They whirl and they leap
Into color and light;
They burst into spray,
Then are lost to the sight.

Similarly,

They dance and they frolic,
Life's joys, every one,
Like wavelets of water
That gleam in the sun;
A moment they halt
In their frolic and flight,
Then burst into spray
And are lost to the sight;
Dissolved in the grey
Of despair and of woe,—
Who knows where the wavelets
Of happiness go?

And all of life's joys
Vanish thus and are gone,
Alas, like the waves
That dance in the sun.

Letteris also wrote several epic poems; one called the *Tiferet Yisrael* (The Glory of Israel) was intended to depict the first great struggle of the Jews for independence, namely the wars with the Babylonians at the time of the destruction of the First Temple with Jeremiah as the central figure, but only one canto was published. The canto describes the parting of a Jewish hero by the name of

Amassah from his wife before going to war. It resembles a similar scene in the Iliad, and the poet undoubtedly used it as his model.

In the field of the drama, our poet did not produce any original works, but translated two Biblical dramas from the French by Racine, *Athalie* and *Esther*. Both of these had been translated previously, the first by David Franco Mendes (Sec. 21) and the second by the historian Solomon Judah Rapoport. He also rendered into Hebrew the first part of Goethe's *Faust* under the name of *Ben Abuya*. By using the name of Ben Abuya, that of an early Tanna, a colleague of Akiba who delved in mysticism and later turned apostate, Letteris wanted to impart a Jewish coloring to the drama. It is, therefore, not a translation but an elaboration and a parody, but unfortunately not a very successful one. The work was later severely criticized by Perez Smolenskin. With the prolific poetic activity of Letteris, the glorious literary epoch of the Galician Haskalah closes.

CHAPTER IV

THE DAWN OF HASKALAH IN RUSSIA

34. *ISAAC BAER LEVINSOHN*

As indicated in the introduction to the preceding chapter, there were two centers of Haskalah in Russia, one in Lithuania and the other in Volhynia. In both of these places, the movement of enlightenment began to strike root simultaneously, in the twenties of the last century. But while in the first, the cause was championed by a group of men who undertook to introduce light and knowledge into the life of their brethren, in the second center the desire found expression only in the efforts of a single man, that of Isaac Baer Levinsohn (1788-1860). He was the apostle of the new tendency in that province of Russia where Hassidism reigned supreme and where, in spite of the proximity to Galicia, Jewish life was little affected by the current of Haskalah across the border and continued along the line of rigid orthodoxy and in accordance with Mediaeval standards. His influence, however, was not limited to the province of Volhynia but spread through the empire, and the ideas expressed in his works stimulated the minds of the readers and gave impetus to the cause of enlightenment in all sections of Russia. He was, therefore, rightly named the Father of Russian Haskalah, and at times is also called the second Mendelssohn.

Isaac Baer Levinsohn was born in Kremenetz, an important city in Volhynia, and except for a brief sojourn in other cities, resided there during his entire life. His father Judah Levin, a wealthy merchant, gave him an exceptional education for that age, for besides Talmud, he was instructed also in Bible and in the Hebrew and Russian languages. He displayed great ability in his studies and at the age of ten had already mastered the entire Bible and a large part of the Talmud. Levinsohn married at the age of eighteen and went to live in Radziwilow, a town on the border of Austria, where he perfected his education by acquiring a knowledge of German, French, and Latin, which served him in good stead during the

Napoleonic wars in Russia, when he was employed as interpreter by a Russian general. He then lived for some time in Galicia, and held the position of teacher for a few years in the modern Jewish school of Brody. There he also made the acquaintance of the leading Maskilim, Erter, Bloch, Rapoport, and Krochmal who befriended him, the last one especially encouraging him to publish some of his writings.

In the year 1820 Levinsohn returned to his native city and began his literary activity. Following the lead of his Galician friends, he wrote a satire against the Ḥassidim entitled *Dibrē Ṣaddikim*, which was later published anonymously. He soon, however, turned to his life's work, that of spreading enlightenment among the Jews, and began to compose his first important work, the *Teudah be-Yisrael* (A Testimony in Israel). His efforts on behalf of the Haskalah aroused the wrath of the Ḥassidim of Kremenetz, and for a time, he left that place and visited the larger cities of Volhynia where he continued to propagate the cause. In 1823 he returned to his home where he took sick and was thus left an invalid for the rest of his life. Yet he continued his studies in the Oriental and classical languages and pursued his literary work. In those days the Russian government became interested in spreading secular education among the Jews and was favorably inclined towards anyone who worked on behalf of enlightenment among them. Levinsohn turned to the government and asked that it publish his book. The Czar, Nicholas I, did not grant his request but ordered that a subsidy of one thousand roubles be given the author. The book was then published in the year 1828, the royal subsidy also serving Levinsohn as a protection against persecution on the part of the fanatics.

From that time on, Levinsohn became a "go-between" between the government and the Jews. It often consulted him on Jewish questions, and the minister of education, the Prince Emanuel Lieven, submitted to him a list of inquiries concerning the nature of Judaism, the Old Testament, the Talmud, the attitude to the study of languages and secular sciences, and similar subjects. The answer to all these questions is contained in his second important work, *Bet Yehudah* (The House of Judah). His relations with the officials of the government gave Levinsohn great prestige in the eyes of the Jews, and when a blood accusation was brought against the Jews of Zaslav in Poland, the leaders of the communities and famous rabbis turned to him asking him to write a book to prove the absurdity of that accusation. He then wrote his *Efes Damim* (literally no

blood, with reference to I Samuel, XVII, 1) which proves conclusively the preposterousness of that accusation. With the publication of that work, Levinsohn became the champion of his people and when an English divine, McCaul, wrote a work against the Talmud which was translated by a Jewish convert into Hebrew under the name *Netivot Olam* (The Paths of the World), he was asked by Sir Moses Montefiore and other leading Jews to write a treatise in refutation of the attack. He then composed the *Zerubabel* in four parts in defense of the Talmud and the Jewish religion. He considered it a continuation of the ideas expounded in the *Bet Yehudah*. He wrote besides these three important works, many other books dealing with various subjects, including poems and satires.

Thus for forty years the man lived as an invalid in the small town of Kremenetz amidst fanatical Hassidim without a circle of intelligent friends, with books as his only companions, and even with these but meagerly supplied, for his poverty prevented him from buying them in sufficient numbers. He complained bitterly in his letters to his friends of his gloomy life, his want, and his misery. Yet these forty years were fruitful years, for his work was not interrupted, and from the desolate corner in Volhynia, his words, which both spread knowledge among the Jews and defended the honor of Judaism and its teachings, went forth and were heard by large numbers of his brethren and even penetrated into the outside world.

In his time, Levinsohn was called by his colleagues and followers "The prince of Hebrew writers" (Abir Sofrē Zemanēnu). It would be very difficult for us, separated from him by an interval of one hundred years, to subscribe to such a judgment, for he was neither an original thinker nor a powerful writer. The value of his literary activity is to be judged not by its intrinsic quality, but by the practical effects which it produced. He was a pathfinder, the first who gave full expression to the strivings of the Haskalah in a popular and pleasing way, and as all pathfinders, he is enveloped with a halo of glory. He was, however, more than a mere propagandist of enlightenment, for in a series of works, he enunciated the principles and teachings of Judaism and thus defended Jewish tradition not only from the attacks of the non-Jewish vilifiers, but indirectly also from the erroneous opinions of the detractors of its value in the ranks of the Maskilim proper.

Levinsohn loved his people, the Hebrew language, and Judaism passionately, and his main striving was to defend and glorify all

three. It was for this reason that he succeeded where others failed. His first important and most popular work, the *Teudah be-Yisrael*, is an apology on behalf of the Haskalah. He sets before the reader in the opening chapter five hypothetical questions which run as follows: (1) Is it incumbent upon every Jew to know the Hebrew language in a correct and grammatical form? (2) Is he allowed to study the languages of other nations? (3) Is he permitted to study secular sciences? (4) What benefit will he derive from the knowledge of languages and sciences? (5) Will the benefits overbalance the possible weakening of religion and faith that may result from such study?

He then proceeds to answer these questions in detail. He proves by numerous quotations from the entire Talmudic and Rabbinic literature that it is the sacred duty of every Jew to master the Hebrew language and grammar, as otherwise he cannot fulfill his religious obligations properly. He proves furthermore, that every Jew who does not wish to be considered ignorant must be versed in the entire Bible. He cites from history that it was considered proper to instruct the children in Hebrew and the Bible before they were introduced to the Talmud and that deviations from such method began only in the last few centuries, especially among the Jews of Germany and Poland. In the same thorough manner, he proves both by citations and by historical examples from all periods that the mastery of another language, especially the language of the country wherein the Jews dwell is not only allowed but is enjoined by the Talmud and all great Rabbinic authorities. Moreover, that many of these authorities wrote their Responsa and their ethical and pious books in the language of the countries wherein they resided. A large part of the book is devoted to the answers of the third and fourth questions. The author shows at length that not only is the study of the secular sciences permissible but is enjoined by the Jewish religion and he marshals an array of passages from Rabbinical literature to that effect. He then elaborates upon the various uses of this study and explains that not only does such study raise the prestige of the Jews among the Gentiles and help to improve their political position, but that it is also conducive to a better understanding of Judaism. He proves conclusively that the reason for many precepts of the Torah as well as the conception of the most important dogmas of religion cannot be attained without the study of the sciences. To buttress his arguments, he draws up a list of great Jews through

the ages, beginning with the patriarchs and ending with Mendelssohn who, in addition to their mastery of Jewish lore, were also well versed in the sciences. He concludes with an appeal for the pursuit of manual labor among the Jews, and especially of the cultivation of the soil. As for the fifth question, he states that a superficial knowledge of the sciences may sometimes mislead one from the path of faith, but a thorough mastery, on the other hand, strengthens religion. Besides, he adds that ignorance and superstition are by no means a protection against sin and evil passions. There are as many sinners among the Ḥassidim as among the enlightened.

All these arguments and proofs, while they seem naive and entirely superfluous in our own days, were quite necessary and valid in Levinsohn's time, and the *Teudah*, written in a simple style and systematic way, really opened a path for Haskalah in Russia. The numerous citations from the Talmud and Rabbinic literature, the historical proofs, and the spirit of sincerity permeating the book made for its popularity, and even the rigid Orthodox, provided they were not ignorant, could hardly gainsay its teachings.

While the *Teudah be-Yisrael* was the most popular book of Levinsohn's, the other two books, *Bet Yehudah* and *Zerubabel*, considered by the author as one, can be said to be his magnum opus. In these two books, he is not the publicist, but the teacher and instructor. The *Bet Yehudah*, according to its title page which states that it covers the essence and principles of Jewish religion, the history of the nation, of its books, writers, and scholars, as well as the many institutions that were established during the ages, was intended to serve as a miniature encyclopaedia of all knowledge concerning the Jews and Judaism. The book displays considerable dependence on Mendelssohn's "Jerusalem" (Sec. 14) and bears a resemblance in its general plan of construction to Krochmal's great work, the *More Nebukē ha-Zeman* (Sec. 76). It is true that the latter was completed only in 1840 and published eleven years later while Levinsohn completed his work in 1822, but it is possible that Krochmal had outlined his work years earlier and had shown it to Levinsohn. However, be that as it may, the *Bet Yehudah* possesses neither the depth of the *More Nebukē ha-Zeman* nor the philosophical ring of the "Jerusalem." Levinsohn was not an original thinker but primarily an eclectic who gathered material and arranged it in a systematic and orderly way.

The *Bet Yehudah* is divided into two parts, the first dealing with the nature of the Jewish religion, its development, and the classes

of its precepts, while the second is devoted to a survey of Jewish literature and institutions. The first is preceded by a brief sketch of Jewish history, in which the description of political life of the nation during the Biblical period occupies the greater part.

In his discussion of the nature of Jewish religion he follows Albo (Vol. II, Sec. 81) and says that the term *Dat*, the commonly accepted term in later Hebrew for religion includes both conventional and divine law, or religion. Since religion is given for the purpose of perfecting human life, which perfection is best attained in the life of society, it follows that conventional law is closely connected with it and is to a certain degree prior to it in time. Religion is further divided into natural and revealed. Natural religion, says he, following Mendelssohn, comprises both the principles of religion and views of right conduct; in short, all beliefs that man can attain by means of reason. The revealed religion is limited to all precepts and commandments revealed by God to a people through chosen spirits, or prophets. He considers revealed religion the higher form, for it is perfect as all works of God are. After these definitions, he goes on to trace the development of religion in Israel from Abraham to the giving of the Torah at Sinai, and follows it by a brief discussion on the written and oral law and their relation to each other. He then evolves his new classification of the precepts of the Torah. The Torah includes: (1) all laws which are subsumed under conventional law, namely injunctions and commandments pertaining to social life or as they are technically called, *Ben Adam le-Habero*; (2) precepts relating to the improvement of opinions and purity of soul, namely those included under natural religion; and (3) pure religious commandments or *Hukkim* which were revealed by God to the Jews. The laws included in the first class are universal, for every nation and society in the world possesses some form of conventional law. But while the principles of these laws are immutable the particulars are subject to change in accordance with the conditions of time and place. Hence, we see such a variance in the formulation of these laws among different nations, and consequently the social and civil laws of the Torah are not only of a special character but are subject to some changes by the judges and jurists of the generations, provided such changes do not oppose the principles enunciated in the Torah. The second class of precepts, since they are based on principles of reason are not dependent on conditions of time and place and are immutable. They are

not, of course, limited to the Jews alone, but have been accepted by all civilized nations in principle. The third class, the purely religious, is again subdivided into two parts: (a) precepts of historical significance connected with the commemoration of some event in the history of the Jews, or with their relation to God as the chosen people, such as the festivals and matters of a similar nature for which the Torah offers a definite reason; and (b) precepts of separation (*Mizwot ha-Geder*) which were intended to separate the Jews from the ways of other nations and make them a distinct people. For many of the latter type of precepts the reasons are not given, but we can surmise that they were meant to improve and elevate the spiritual status of the people. It follows, of course, that all these precepts are limited to the Jews only. As a result of this classification, Levinsohn formulates his view on the question of religious reforms. As stated, the second class of precepts, those included under natural religion, cannot be changed or reformed, being based on immutable principles of reason; but as regards the social and civil laws, the interpreters of the law allowed a certain latitude both in altering their particulars and in adding ordinances and institutions in accordance with conditions. The purely religious laws, those included under historical, however, cannot be changed in their particulars, though the interpreters of the law say that some new ordinances and institutions may be added, as was the case with Purim and Hanukkah. The scholars are also allowed to suspend temporarily the performance of an explicit precept of the Torah if a great exigency arises. Similarly they have also a right to alter or even to suspend temporarily one or more of the precepts of separation by means of certain devices. However, the right of suspending and altering the religious laws is limited by our author to a court whose authority is accepted by all Israel, for otherwise the unity of the nation might be impaired. In this way, Levinsohn expressed himself as opposed to any fundamental religious reforms, though he afforded some latitude to minor ones, and like all the enlightened of his time, speaks against the excessive severities imposed by later rabbis.

Following Mendelssohn, the author emphasizes the importance of practical religion and states that every Jew, though he may be allowed freedom of thought, is obligated to observe the laws and not separate himself from the community of Israel. On the other hand, he includes under the fundamentals of the Torah also the study of natural sciences and that of metaphysics. The first is con-

ducive to the improvement of human life and society, which is one of the aims of the Torah, and the second to the formation of the right opinions about God and His relation to the world which is another of its aims.

After enunciating these principles which purport to present an enlightened and at the same time a traditional view of Judaism, he goes on to expound the nature of the Bible and its relation to the oral law. The second part of the book is devoted to a survey of the literature of the Jews from the Bible to the sixteenth century as well as of the sects and institutions that have arisen in Judaism through the ages. This survey is written with a purpose to show that in all times the leaders of Jewry were men of enlightenment who strove to unite secular knowledge with religion and piety. It is only during the last few centuries, due to certain conditions, that the Germanic and Polish Jewries had turned from the right path and had led a life of excessive legal severity and extreme separation from the surrounding world. Such a tendency brought about deterioration in Jewish life. He, therefore, proposes a program, which differs little from that advocated by the Maskilim of the time, for improving that life. He asks for reforms in Jewish education, in the training of rabbis, in the reorganization of the Rabbinate and the management of the communities, and finally for changes in the economic pursuits, namely that the Jews turn to manual labor and agriculture.

The *Zerubabel* was written, as mentioned, for the purpose of refuting the attacks of the English minister, McCaul, against the Talmud and Judaism. It is, therefore, primarily an apologetic work, but the first part of the four into which it is divided is really a continuation of the *Bet Yehudah*. It is subdivided into three sections. The first deals with the seven precepts of the Noahides, the religion, which according to the Talmud, was professed by people before the giving of the Torah,¹ with the relation between the written and the oral law, and with the nature of the Agada. In regard to the first, Levinsohn endeavors to prove that since these seven precepts are, with the exception of one, namely the commandment of establishing courts of justice, prohibitive, it follows that the Noahides were also obligated to observe an additional number of affirmative precepts, at least such that are conducive to the welfare of human life and society. These Noahide precepts, therefore, form the bulk of what we would

¹ These seven precepts include the most important injunctions of conventional law and the principles of universal religion. For their enumeration see Ch. I. note 37.

call the natural religion. The Talmud calls the observer of the seven precepts a pious man, and allows him a share in the world to come. Hence, the author concludes that all Gentiles, followers of the established religions are to be considered, from the point of view of the Torah, pious men. The Jews though are obligated to observe all laws of the Torah, which were given to them exclusively, not only in the form stated by the Pentateuch but also in accordance with the interpretation of the oral law. To prove this point, he discusses at length the necessity of the oral law as a complement to the Torah, and that it follows from the very nature of the written law. He limits the term oral law to the Halakah but not to the Agada. The opinions expressed in the Agada are not obligatory upon the Jews. He elucidates the view by an extensive exposition of the nature of the Agada, which includes expressions both of individuals and groups of scholars on a variety of subjects, with no intention to make such views authoritative.

In the second section, he discusses the nature of religion in general and that of Judaism in particular. He makes it clear that Judaism is not merely a religion but a complete way of life, inasmuch as its precepts embrace all phases of both the life of the individual and of the group. He emphasizes its national character and its great value for the preservation of Israel through the ages. Observance of the law is to him, therefore, a national duty, and uniformity in such observance a necessity. The disruption of such uniformity would cause dissension and ultimately bring about the annihilation of the people. "There is," the author concludes passionately, "no greater sin than that of the man who causes the disappearance of his nation from the world."²

The third section is devoted to the proving of the authenticity and antiquity of the oral law, to the explanation of the functions and activities of the *Sopherim* (scribes) and the Sanhedrin, and to a further elucidation of the character of the Mishnah. The other three parts of the book deal at length with the attacks of McCaul against the Talmud. Each of his arguments is analyzed and refuted. The refutations are valuable not merely for their apologetics, but because they clarify the views of the Talmud on such important subjects and principles, as love of humanity, freedom of thought, the position of the ignorant man (*Am ha-Arez*) and of the woman in Judaism, the Sabbath, and other theological principles.

² *Zerubabel*, Pt. I, p. 84.

Of his other works, mention should be made of the *Efes Damim* which proves the absurdity of the blood accusation. It is written in the form of a dialogue between Simmias, Patriarch of the Greek Catholic Church, and Abraham Maimon, a Jewish scholar. The patriarch, though liberal in his opinions and a great friend of Maimon, entertained a suspicion that there might be some ground to that terrible accusation, and Maimon proceeds to convince him of its absurdity. Of the nine dialogues, eight deal with the origin of that accusation, its falsity and preposterousness, and in general vindicate the humane character of the Jewish religion, the friendly attitude of the Jews towards the Christians, and their loyalty to the country in which they reside. The ninth dialogue contains some bulls of the pope and decrees of Polish kings against this accusation. The book, on the whole, is not distinguished by thoroughness and historical erudition, for as Levinsohn himself says in the introduction he was prevented, by lack of funds, from obtaining the necessary books and documents. Yet there is a certain precision and clarity in the presentation of the material he had at hand, which greatly influenced the people of his generation. It was translated into Russian, Polish, and English.

Levinsohn wrote also many other works, dealing with Hebrew lexicography and subjects of Jewish history, among them the *Oẓar Yehudah* (The Treasury of Judah), *Toldot Shem* (The Generation of Shem), *Bikkurē Ribal* (The Criticism of Ribal i.e. Isaac Baer Levinsohn), and the *Eshkol ha-Sofer*. The first contains studies in Hebrew and Talmudic lexicography, in liturgy, in the history of the Kabbala, especially that of the *Zohar*, and also several translations, among them the Apology of Josephus against Apion. The second is a kind of encyclopaedic dictionary of selected terms and subjects bearing upon the Hebrew language and literature. The third is a collection of critical essays, and the fourth a collection of poems, satires, and epigrams. Of the satires, the *Dibrē Ṣaddikim* and *Emek Rephaim* are the most important. Both are written in the form of letters and visions in imitation of Perl and Erter. Their purpose is to ridicule the activities of the Ḥassidic leaders and to show the hypocrisy of the *Ṣaddikim* and the excessive credulity of the masses. They possess, though, neither the poetic fantasy of Erter nor his breadth of vision, nor the interest and naturalness of Perl's works, but are stamped with the mark of artificiality and laboriousness.

However, it is not the satires and poems which constitute his

contribution to modern Hebrew literature, but the more important work spoken of above. True, Levinsohn was not an original thinker, nor was his erudition wide, but he possessed the gift of selecting the most important facts and views and placing them before the reader in an orderly and systematic manner. He thus not only supplied all those who read only Hebrew with much information on many subjects, but widened their horizon and helped them to form a clearer, more liberal, and more rational view of Judaism and its teachings, as well as of the relation of the Jew to the surrounding world. He did even more than that, for through his impassioned love for the Jewish people, its traditions and the Hebrew language which permeates his works, he counterbalanced the negative tendency of the Haskalah and contributed towards making it a positive and constructive force in Jewish life.

35. *THE WILNA CENTER* (M. A. Günzburg)

The efforts of Levinsohn brought fruit. It did not take long and there arose many writers, who like him, helped to spread knowledge among their brethren. But the soil of Volhynia was not entirely suited for a wide Haskalah movement at that time, and the work of enlightenment was carried on by sporadic efforts of individuals. It did, however, fare better in Lithuania; there it really found a center in the city of Wilna, where a group of Maskilim worked together on its behalf. The character of the Lithuanian Haskalah differed though from that of Levinsohn's. It was not as much interested in historical studies as in introducing more secular knowledge among the Jews. In other words, it was more worldly than Jewish. It, therefore, expressed itself in many translations of books on history, geography, and kindred sciences. Later the prose writers of that center began also to translate novels and romances into Hebrew from other languages, and thus helped to cultivate a taste among their readers for belles-lettres. The Jewish side of that movement was expressed by Biblical and linguistic studies, for the group of Wilna Maskilim among whom were men, who later distinguished themselves as poets, bibliographers, and historians, such as Abraham Lebensohn, Isaac Benjacob and S. J. Fünin, were greatly influenced by the German type of enlightenment and by its spirit of reverence for the Bible and its language. One of the moving spirits of that group in the

early days of this activity was Mordecai Aaron Günzburg (1796-1847).

Günzburg was a prolific writer and the number of his works is quite considerable, but most of them, with the exception of two, are translations. He was primarily interested in great historical events which he proceeded to describe to his brethren. To him Haskalah meant knowledge of world affairs. He began his literary career with an elaboration of Campe's German work, the *Discovery of America*, which he named in Hebrew *Glōt ha-Areẓ ha-Hādāshah*. He followed this with the first part of a universal history, entitled *Toldot Benē ha-Adam* (The History of Mankind), *'Itote Rusiah*, a short history of Russia, *ha-Zarfātim be-Rusiah* (The French in Russia), the history of the French invasion of Russia, and the *Pi ha-Herut*, the history of the Napoleonic Wars. He also translated and wrote some works of special interest to Jews, such as the *Debir*, a collection of articles and stories, the *Melaḳut Pilon ha-Yehudi* (The Legation of Philo Judaeus), telling of Philo's legation to the Emperor Caligula on behalf of the Jews in Egypt, and the *Ḥamat Damesek* (The Persecution at Damascus). The last work narrates in detail the events of the famous blood accusation at Damascus in the year 1840 and the efforts of Montefiore and Cremieux to free the innocent Jews.

Günzburg's most important and entirely original work is his autobiography named *Abiezer*. It is distinguished both by its content and style. It was the first of its kind in modern Hebrew literature and is still one of the few autobiographies in that literature. It is written in a very frank manner, somewhat in imitation of Rousseau's *Confessions* and narrates the life of a gifted Jewish boy, placed in the environment of a small Lithuanian town, from his birth up to the time he reached full manhood in his early twenties.

There is nothing extraordinary in the narrative. There is no struggle either with poverty or with militant fanaticism for the attainment of enlightenment. On the contrary, young Günzburg was the son of comparatively well-to-do parents, and his father was a well-educated and liberal man. His life, on the whole, flowed smoothly except for the few years after his early marriage at the age of fourteen. Yet the story possesses human interest. We get a true picture of the life of the Jews in the small towns of Lithuania as it was lived more than a hundred years ago, of its joys and sorrows, of the methods of Jewish education, of its peculiar custom of marrying

of children in their teens, and of both the ludicrous and tragic consequences of such marriages. There are fine descriptions of the character of his father, of his various teachers, of the Heder and of a philosophic old physician. As all works of the Haskalah, the autobiography has a tendency to teach and to decry the evils of the contemporary Jewish life. In fact this was the motive for its writing and is quite marked in the entire narrative. The writer points out the evils resulting from the excessive care bestowed by the Jews upon their children in infancy. He claims that it rather weakens than strengthens their bodies, and he likewise demonstrates the injurious effect upon the constitution of children born of parents married at an immature age, and similar impractical ways of life. The didactic character of the book is also evident in Günzburg's method to introduce each chapter with a parable, fable, or anecdote and to intersperse the narrative with discourses on moral and theological questions. Yet these additions do not tire the reader, for they are dexterously interwoven, and enliven the story.

In general, the style of Günzburg is his chief contribution, for he was one of the first writers who introduced the simple and light prose style in modern Hebrew literature. It is Biblical yet not ornate. It is flowing, clear and sufficiently elastic to express his ideas and views without resorting to the quotations of fragments of Biblical verses as most of the writers of the day. It was considered a model prose style in his day and justly so.

At the death of Günzburg, the Haskalah was already a wide-spread movement. The efforts of the government to enlighten the Jews, supported by the groups of Maskilim in various cities, though not entirely successful, yet created an impetus for a change in Jewish life, for a wider knowledge and broader interest, for the spread of the Hebrew language, and together with it for a desire on the part of the enlightened to express themselves in literary productivity. The result was a constant development of Hebrew literature both in poetry and prose. The forty years from 1840 to 1880, the end of the Haskalah period, were exceptionally productive in literary endeavors. During that short period there arose great singers who once more struck the ancient lyre of Israel, and it emitted both sweet and forceful melodies, and to the appreciation of the value and influence of the works of the Bards of the Haskalah we devote the succeeding chapter.

CHAPTER V

THE POETRY OF THE HASKALAH

36. *INTRODUCTORY*

The Haskalah movement in its second period, the purpose of which was not merely to spread secular knowledge among the Jews but also to create new values in Jewish life, produced a considerable poetic literature, which was stamped with a more original character than the poetry of the preceding period. The greater part of the poems consisted to a great extent of original productions and not of translations as heretofore. That there were minor poets who still busied themselves with translating from the works of German and later even of Russian poets goes without saying, but the great masters of song, those who really deserve the name of poets, engaged but little in translation. Nor is imitation much in evidence. There was undoubtedly influence exerted by the great poets of European literature, still that poetry, on the whole, possesses a character of its own.

The nature of the poetry is not a homogenous but a heterogenous one. It is at the same time humanistic and nationalistic, romantic and realistic, didactic and to a certain extent also polemic. The lines cannot be drawn fast, for we often find all these characteristics in the same poet. The period was a period of transition, Jewish life was changing, new ideas were blending with the old which still held sway, and the poets reflect all these metamorphoses. As children of the ghetto, saturated with Jewish lore and trained in the typical Jewish life, they possessed great love for their people, its traditions and past history, and they could not help but express their feelings in song. As men of enlightenment, they revered secular knowledge and were imbued with all humanistic ideas and ideals; and finally, as Maskilim, they were desirous to instruct their brethren, to reveal to them the beauties of the great world, the value and worth of knowledge, as well as to point out to them the narrowness of their lives. The last tendency often became all-dominant, and instead of instruction, we have attacks against excessive legalism and polemics

against rigid piety and fanaticism. Hence the poetry of the Haskalah sings of the glories of the past, echoes the woes and suffering of the nation, pictures the beauties of the world, glorifies reason and knowledge, delves into the mysteries of life and bewails its miseries, satirizes contemporary Jewish life, and polemizes against some of its forms.

Due to the motives which animated it and also to the fact that most of the poets of the period were ghetto-trained, the poetry bears a serious character. There is little lightness in it and not much naturalness. It is primarily a poetry where thought and reflection predominate, and life in general and that of the nation in particular forms the subject of its leading themes. The life of the individual, however, his feelings and reaction to the world play a small part in that poetry with the exception of that of young Lebensohn (Mikal). The poets of the period sang of love and beauty, of nature and man, and at times, with skill and even with feeling, but they did not excel in that. Such poems were written primarily as a matter of duty and emanated more from the brain than the heart.

As a result, we have in the poetry of the Haskalah comparatively few lyrics, and its predominating form is the long narrative poem. That type of poem is, in the earlier epoch, which is generally denominated the romantic, mainly epical and historical; in the later, it is satirical and polemic. This form was best suited to the poets of the Haskalah. On the one hand, they followed the earlier poets, who on account of the poverty of their lives, turned to the past, especially to the Biblical period, for poetic material; and on the other hand, the long poem gave them the possibility to develop their views of life in a broad and grand manner. As the poetry of the period is mainly secular, the religious element is not much in evidence, but is not entirely absent. We find a number of odes to God written by various poets, and even nature poems which were often tinged with religious coloring. The drama was likewise little cultivated. With the exception of several allegorical and Biblical dramas, hardly any drama touching upon modern life was produced during the entire period. Both the poverty and narrowness of Jewish life at the time, and the temper and spirit of the poets were not conducive to the development of that species of poetic activity.

Many were those during the brief but intensely colorful period of the Haskalah, who clamored for admission to the palace of the muses, but only few gained entrance. Of these few, three are outstanding: Abraham Dob Lebensohn, his son, Micah Joseph, and Judah Leib

Gordon. It is the works of these three which constitute the best that there is in the poetry of the period, and in them is reflected its spirit in all its phases and forms.

37. ABRAHAM DOB LEBENSOHN

Abraham Dob Lebensohn (1794-1879) was born in Wilna, and in that city, with the exception of a few years, he spent most of his life. Until the age of eleven he was engaged solely in the study of the Talmud, but in that year he was introduced to the study of the Bible which became his favorite subject. At thirteen, he married into one of the leading Jewish families in the town of Mikalishok whither he removed and lived in the home of his father-in-law for eight years. He was thenceforth known among his friends as Abraham Dob Mikalishker, the initials of which, ADaM, (אדמ) became his pen name. During these eight years, he perfected himself in the Hebrew language and its grammar as well as in the study of other languages. Besides Hebrew, however, he never mastered any European language thoroughly. He then moved to Oshmina, a nearby town, and engaged for a time in business, but was unsuccessful in his enterprises; he returned to his native city Wilna and became a tutor in the house of Katzenelenbogen. For ten years he imparted instruction to Jewish children until he was affected by tuberculosis. His sickness forced him to abandon teaching, and for the next fifteen years, he occupied himself as a loan broker.

During all the years he was engaged in business, teaching, and in brokerage, Lebensohn never ceased to increase his knowledge of the Hebrew language. He began his literary activity at the age of twenty-eight with a long Hebrew poem in honor of Count Tyszkiewicz, the governor of the province and followed it occasionally with a number of such laudatory poems and many of a more exalted nature. Finally in 1842, there appeared in Leipzig the first volume of his collected poems entitled *Shirê Sfat Kodesh* (The Songs of the Holy Tongue) which at once placed him among the foremost poets of his time. He was also productive in his other favorite field, that of Bible exegesis and Hebrew grammar, and abandoning the brokerage business, he undertook together with his friend, the bibliographer Isaac Benjacob (Jacobson), the publication of a new edition of the Old Testament. It contained the German translation and the commentaries known as the *Biur*, formerly published by the Berlin group of Maskilim, to which he added selections from older commentators under the name of

Biurim Yeshonim (Old Explanations) and comments of his own and of other contemporary exegetes called *Biurim Hadashim* (New Comments). The venture was, to a certain degree, successful even financially, but it did not provide Lebensohn with permanent means of a livelihood. His friends, thereupon, secured for him a position as teacher of Hebrew and Aramaic in the Rabbinical Seminary opened by the government in 1848. He held this position for twenty years, and then resigned in order to devote himself entirely to literary work until the day of his death.

Of his poems, there appeared in 1856, fourteen years after the publication of the first volume, the second collection called Volume II of *Shirē Sfat Kodesh*, and in 1867, Volume III which contains the allegorical drama, *Emet we-Emunah*. In the field of exegesis and grammar, his important works are: the *Torat ha-Adam*, Commentaries on the Books of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the minor prophets, and the *Yitron la-Adam*, notes and additions to Ben-Zeeb's Hebrew grammar, the *Talmud Leshon Ibri*, which were published by him in his new edition of the work in 1874. The exegetic and grammatical works made the name of ADaM famous as one of the leading Hebrew scholars of the day. Still, important as they were, they do not constitute Lebensohn's real contribution to Hebrew letters. His claim to fame rests entirely on his poetic productions.

The name given by Lebensohn to his collection of poems, *Shirē Sfat Kodesh* is to a degree symbolic of the nature and character of his poetry. The holiness which he imputed to the language is also in a way attached to the content of his poems. They are permeated with that deep spirit of seriousness and earnestness with which we approach things holy and sublime. He does not sing freely and naturally, for all his poems are premeditated and the fruit of reflection. They possess deep feeling and even pathos, but the feeling is exalted by an element of contemplation. He began his poetic activity at an age when man is no more stirred by the seething emotions of youth, when the great problems of life weigh heavily upon the mature man. He could not therefore, be captivated by the beauties of nature, though he is not insensible to them, or by the allurements of love and the mere joy of living. These, therefore, have no leading place in his poetry. Love especially was unknown to him, and except for love of man, it is hardly touched upon in his poems. He is chiefly engrossed by the problems presented by life and the world. It is, though, not life in all its phases the gay as well as the serious, nor the fleeting moments

of the life of the individual in its vicissitudes of light and shade which form the motives of his poems. It is primarily the serious aspects of human life in general, its mystery, its contradictions, difficulties, its shortness, and the pitfalls it places before man, that he sings of. His own life was spent in struggle, both material and spiritual, and this entered into the makeup of his poems. Striving throughout his life to the light of reason, and possessing a feeling heart for all that is good and noble, and believing that the handiwork of God must be good and perfect, he is sorely vexed when looking out upon the world and life he finds neither light predominating, nor good abounding, nor reason prevailing, but instead a constant struggle between light and darkness, reason and ignorance, and good and bad. Like *Koheleth* of old, he is at times inclined to proclaim that all is vain and in fact does so in one of his poems entitled *ha-Kol Hebel* (All is Vain), but is restrained from falling into complete pessimism by his belief in the all-encompassing reason of God who made the world harmonious and for a good purpose, though in our limited experience, we fail to comprehend it.

The struggle between light and darkness forms the fundamental note in his few nature poems. The poet does not pass unnoticed the charms of nature which he pictures skilfully, but is primarily interested in the light of the sun and its enemy, darkness. The setting of the sun and arrival of night are thus described in one of his poems entitled *Hegyon la-Ereb* (Evening Meditations).

At the edge of the heavens, yet still descending,
 The hem of her garment with darkness blending.
 The darkness leaped up from the ambush of night
 Like sinister wolves from the depths to the height;
 From the desolate pit, to vanquish the light.
 It engulfed all the earth with ravenous might
 Like the flood of black waters, till lost from our sight
 Was the world and its verdure.
 Now vainly I call
 To the people of earth.
 Where are they all?¹

Bewailing then the reign of darkness, he comforts himself with the knowledge that man is the only one who ceases from his work at the arrival of night, and that God, the source of light, watches over him

¹ *Shirê Sfai Kodesh* Vol. I, p. 11.

even then. Nature, though continues its work both night and day. The grass continues to grow, and the roots of the trees draw their nourishment from the earth and water, and circulate it to branch and leaf. The flowers too work at night, the white lily grows whiter and the red rose redder. Even the rest of man is only apparent, for his organs continue their functions and gather strength for the new day. Yet he considers darkness the enemy of man and his morning song, *la-Boqer Rinah* is a hymn to the sun which by its light arouses man to activity. The poet's passion for light and life makes him exalt in his poem *ha-Abib* (Spring) the coming of spring when the days grow longer and all things burst into bloom. But it is not the beauty that captivates him but the grandness of nature as a whole and its multiplicity of appearances which are regulated by the uniformity of law. And being moved by this contemplation, coupled with a feeling of piety, he exclaims:

The blossoms of this tree come forth in white;
And red are the flowers of the other.
How varied the tints of each bud to the sight,
In color not one like his brother.
So different, so varied, seem all that we know,
All gay-colored things 'neath the sun.
Yet this I believe, of the flowers that grow,
The God of them all is one.²

His joy, though, is not complete, for with the constancy of the law, there is inconstancy of existence. Turning to the blooming flowers, he notices near them withered leaves of the last year's flowers, and that reminds him of the constant cycle, of becoming and passing, of life and death, life flourishing amidst the ruins of death, and death devastating life. The cry of Koheleth of old, "A generation goeth, and a generation cometh, but the earth standeth forever" (Ecclesiastes, Ch. I, 4) is mournfully repeated by our poet.

From the struggles going on in nature, Lebensohn turns to human life which presents struggle in a tragic aspect. There, the fleetness of human life is pitted against the all-encompassing reason of man which strives to know all. This striving, though is obstructed both by the limits which God set to reason and by the knowledge of death which embitters the life of man. This tragedy is expressed by our

² Ibid., p. 28.

poet in a group of poems, the best of which is *ha-Da'at we-ha-Mowet* (Reason and Death). The poem is divided into four parts. The first opens with a description of the universe, its magnitude and extent, and against this background are presented both the littleness of man and his encompassing intellect which knows the universe and even the eternity of its own ideas. It, however, also knows its own limitations, for besides the fact that the human mind cannot penetrate the entire mystery of the world, with death there comes an end to intellectual activity. The conflict between knowledge and death is the theme of the second part. The poet complains bitterly against death, the destroyer of the finest minds who, during life, rose to the greatest heights. He shudders to think of the swiftness with which life passes and all glory with it. He exclaims:

Oh, that generations die as candles do,
And with their last flickering sigh
Kindle the new.

In the third part the poet turns to religion for comfort, and advises man to submit to his fate, to be satisfied with the limitations set upon his reason and devote himself to the doing of good, and hope for everlasting life after death, when his mind will grasp the deepest truths. Faith to him, though, is only a substitute for reason which must be accepted by necessity. The relation of the two is described by him in a noble stanza:

Man knows—

That all his intellect is as the sun,
Whose light must fade before the terror of the night
And softly bless the moon with distant light,
That man may see the path ahead.
Thus, when too dark the night,
Man's Reason sends forth Faith
To guide us in her stead.³

The poet is still more moved by the struggle between good and evil both in the world and in life. The antagonism between our conception of God, the creator of the world, as the source of goodness and the predominance of evil in this very world baffles him and he expresses his complaint in one of his best poems, *ha-Hemlah* (Mercy).

³ Ibid., Vol. II, p. 14.

Lebensohn makes Mercy utter her protest against the evil in the world in its several manifestations. In the first four parts of the poem, Mercy describes the violence and blood-thirstiness predominating in the animal world, in the conduct of man towards the animals, in that of man toward man, and finally the evils accruing to man at the hands of nature. The description of all these phases of suffering is stirring, and full of pathos, and reveals to us the great tragedy of existence. In the concluding part, there is an attempt to find some comfort in the existing order of the world. God answers the complaint of Mercy thus: The struggle between good and evil is the inexorable law of existence, and it is for the best purpose, for a world of good only could not exist, and the very conflict between opposite forces supplies harmony to the world.

The variety in the world, the vicissitudes of the life of man, and the harmony underlying it, all are frequent themes with our poet. In a short poem, *ha-Temurah* (Change), he pictures vividly the cycle of changes going on in nature and in the life of man in its three phases, physical, spiritual, and rational. These are then summarized thus:

Grass suckles on earth's strength;
Then sheep devour the verdant wave
Of green; then man at length devours the sheep,
And him devours the grave.

Again:

The spirit of God's light
Wreathes every height;
Rests within man's house of sod,
And then returns to God.

Finally:

Wisdom comes of God,
Fills every cloud and clod.
There feeds the soul 'neath Heaven's dome,
Till it be gathered home.⁴

In another poem called "The Rungs of the Ladder," Lebensohn allegorizes the dream of Jacob wherein he saw a ladder reaching from

⁴ Ibid., Vol. I, p. 223.

earth to heaven (Gen. Ch. XXVIII, 12-14). The ladder represents the universe, and the innumerable rungs the various phases of creation differing in degree but all joined to one another. The vast ladder in its entirety is conceived by God alone, while man can have only a glimpse of its harmony and thus wonder at the greatness of God.

Oppressed by the struggle around him, our poet is overwhelmingly pessimistic and is cheered only by his religious sentiment which is more a result of reason than actual piety. But from time to time, there creeps into his poetry an optimistic note. This is expressed in his delightful poem, *Dal Mebin* (The Wise Poor) where the lives of the rich and poor are contrasted, and the poor man shows that on the whole there is more happiness in his life than in that of the rich man. The care, worry, and disappointments which wealth entails and the misfortunes which result from a life of luxury outweigh the privation and physical sufferings of the poor. The poem, written in a short, light meter, was very popular and was sung for many years by thousands of young men.

As most of the poets of his time, Lebensohn wrote many occasional poems in honor of kings and princes and in celebration of important events in the community as well as many elegies. Of these, the most pathetic is the elegy he wrote on the death of his gifted son, Micah called *Mikāl Dim'ah* (The Stream of Tears), with reference to the initials of his son's pen name *Mikāl*, i.e. Micah Joseph Lebensohn. It is long and narrative in character, and describes the life of the young poet, his poetic accomplishment, his suffering for years from the dreaded disease of tuberculosis, and the moment of death. The detailed narrative detracts much from the poetic character of the elegy, but some of the passages are stirring in their pathos.

Lebensohn, the poet of life and reason, the champion of enlightenment, also gave us the drama of the Haskalah which is the only drama where the struggle between knowledge and ignorance is allegorically depicted. The drama is called *Emet we-Emunah* (Truth and Belief). It is thoroughly permeated with the spirit of enlightenment, and its purpose is to decry the ignorance in which the people are sunk, the evils entailed by superstitions fostered by the teachers of the people, and also to point out the way of real belief which must be wedded to truth and guided by reason. All these ideas are represented in the dramatis personae and developed in the plot. The dramatis personae are: *Hokmah* (Wisdom), the queen of the land; *Emet* (Truth) her vice-regent; *Seḳel* (Reason), her counsellor; *Siklur*

(Superficiality),⁶ the servant of the queen; *Mirmah* (Deceit), the counsellor of *Siklut*; *Hamon* (Populace); *Ptayut* (Light-mindedness), his wife; *Emunah* (Faculty of Faith), their daughter; *Dimyon* (Imagination), a friend of *Hamon*; *Sheker* (Falsehood), his son; *Ikshut* (Arrogance), the daughter of *Sheker* and *Emunah*; *Zib'on*, (Hypocrisy), the teacher of *Hamon*; servants and wise men.

The plot which is developed in three acts and twelve scenes is as follows: *Hokmah*, the queen of the land, sends *Sequel*, her counsellor, to investigate the conditions at Luz, a city where a revolt instigated by *Mirmah*, *Sikluth*, and *Sheker* recently broke out. *Sequel* reports that the revolt was crushed but that conditions are not entirely satisfactory. The instigators found refuge with *Hamon*, a powerful and wealthy man whose mentor is *Zib'on*, and he fears that these together with *Zib'on*, who is the enemy of Wisdom, will influence *Hamon* and his numerous family to rebel against the queen. He, therefore, advises that in order to forestall the plot, *Emet*, the vice-regent of the realm, be wedded to *Emunah*, the daughter of *Hamon*, and thus attach him and his followers to the queen. *Hokmah* approves of the plan, and *Sequel* is sent to negotiate the marriage. Meanwhile *Siklut* and *Mirmah* have persuaded *Hamon* and his wife to pledge *Emunah* to *Sheker*, the son of *Dimyon*, who is a friend of *Hamon*. When *Sequel* proposes in the name of the queen marriage between *Emet* and *Emunah*, *Hamon* and his wife are greatly perplexed. They do not like to break the pledge given to *Sheker*, but at the same time, they are anxious to obey the command of the queen and desirous to have *Emet*, the vice-regent and first lord of the land, as their son-in-law. In their perplexity, they consult *Zib'on*, their teacher and guide. The latter who is in alliance with *Siklut* and *Mirmah* is strongly opposed to the match between *Emet* and *Emunah*, for then his machinations would be discovered by *Emet* and his influence over *Hamon* would diminish. Fearing to voice his opposition openly, he acts warily and delays decision for a few days. He invites *Ptayut* and *Emunah* to his room and consults their wishes in the matter. *Ptayut*, with typical light-mindedness, consents to wed *Emunah* to both *Emet* and *Sheker*. *Emunah*, however, wants only *Emet*. A conference is then held between *Zib'on* and his allies where a plan is proposed by the former to present *Sheker* in the guise and garb of *Emet* and thus marry him to

⁶ Lebensohn explains that *Siklut* is not to be interpreted as ignorance as it is usually done, nor is *Ptayut* foolishness, but the first is to be understood as knowledge mixed with imagination, while the second which he derives from a root פתח, to widen, denotes an inclination to accept every statement without proof.

Emunah. *Zib'on* advises *Hamon* to take *Emet* as his son-in-law and offers to act as his emissary to bring the groom to the house of the bride. On the way from the capital, the companions of *Zib'on* attack *Emet*, imprison him in a cave, strip him of his garments, and put them on *Sheker* who is then, under the name of *Emet*, presented as the groom. *Hamon* and his wife are pleased with him, but *Emunah* feels vaguely that the features of her groom do not agree with the ideal picture she had of him. Her objections, however, are overruled, and the marriage takes place. *Zib'on*, in order to show his admiration for the disguised *Sheker*, gives him also his daughter *Tehillah* (Fame) as a concubine. He then rules in the name of *Emet*.

Years pass and the results of the rule of falsehood become evident. *Hamon* becomes poorer and more and more superstitious, falling completely under the influence of *Zib'on*. Unjust decrees issued by *Sheker* under the seal of *Emet* multiply and confusion reigns in the realm of the queen. *Sequel* is greatly disturbed and comes to *Hokmah* to complain of the deeds of *Emet*. She tells him of letters received by her from *Hamon* wherein he complains of his constantly increasing poverty and asks for succor. They decide to investigate the matter, and *Sequel* goes to the house of *Hamon*. There he finds *Emunah* greatly disappointed with her husband. She tells him that he prefers his concubine, *Tehillah*, to her, and spends most of his time at the house of *Zib'on*. *Sequel* sends for the supposed *Emet*, but he refuses to come as he fears that *Sequel* will see through his disguise. *Hamon* likewise refuses to come. *Sequel* then goes out to the field and offers a prayer to God asking for guidance. As if in reply to his prayer, he hears the voice of the imprisoned *Emet* issuing from the cave. He liberates him with the help of wise men and presents him to *Emunah*. She, perceiving the deceit practiced on her, becomes desperate, and with her own hands kills her daughter *Ikshut* whom she begot by the disguised *Sheker*. Meanwhile *Zib'on* and his companions, fearing discovery, accuse *Sequel* of kidnapping the imprisoned man and are about to imprison him in his stead. Suddenly, the queen herself appears and issues her decrees: *Emunah* is to be married to *Emet*, *Tehillah* to *Sequel*, for Reason alone deserves Fame; *Siklut* is adjudged to become the maid-servant of *Emunah* and to be instructed by *Emet*. *Zib'on* is deprived of his right to teach and is degraded to the status of a hewer of wood and a drawer of water for the wise men. All submit to her decisions.

The meaning of this allegorical drama is quite clear. It is a

polemic against the prevailing forms of Jewish life. The masses (Hamon) misled by the teachings of shrewd but hypocritical men, mistake superstition for true religion and flee from Reason and Wisdom. Their only salvation lies therefore, in enlightenment, when Reason will rule and Faith will be joined to Truth. We can undoubtedly see in this dramatic production of Lebensohn the influence of Luzzatto's *la-Yeshorim Tehillah* and also that of Molière's drama, *Tartuffe*, the leading character of which *Zib'on* resembles closely both in his conduct and in his role of teacher and guide of the masses. Lebensohn, however, falls far behind both. He possesses neither the poetic power of the former nor the dramatic ability of the latter. There is, on the whole, little action in the drama and too many long monologues and soliloquies which are either devoted to the description of the world in a scientific manner or to polemics against the teachings of the Kabbala, or to ridiculing the prevailing popular customs, such as early marriages and similar matters. In general, a dry rational spirit pervades the entire drama with little of the emotional. It is in line with the entire poetry of Lebensohn which is of the philosophic and didactic type. But while in his poetry, we are often stirred by the pathos of the tragedy of life and by the suffering of man, the drama moves entirely in an atmosphere of rationalism. Yet it possesses considerable merit, for the plot and the ideas underlying it are developed with a certain amount of skill and dexterity and the characters are drawn clearly and in harmony with the ideas they are supposed to embody. There is a lack of technique, of course, but this was to be expected from Lebensohn whose life as a teacher was spent within the walls of the ghetto and whose general education was deficient.

The style of Abraham Dob Lebensohn is purely Biblical, and only on rare occasions does he employ a phrase borrowed from the Agada. His meter is, as a rule, the eleven vowel line, the one established by Wessely, but in certain poems he uses shorter meters, the seven, the four, and even the three syllable lines. The stanzas consist, with some exceptions, of six lines which are closely connected with each other.

38. MICAH JOSEPH LEBENSOHN

With Micah Joseph Lebensohn (1828-1852), the son of Abraham Dob, the Haskalah poetry made a great step forward both towards the fulfilling of the real function of poetry, that of expressing the

innermost feelings of man in his relation to life and nature, and towards becoming more and more the vehicle of national expression.

Micah Joseph was born in Wilna at a time when his father was in the midst of his activity as a leader of the movement of enlightenment; his education was, therefore, not one-sided. While a mere youth he was already conversant with several European languages, especially German, and was greatly influenced by their literatures. Bred in an atmosphere of love for Hebrew, he mastered it thoroughly, and being endowed with exceptional skill in its manipulation, he began at the age of thirteen to translate the works of the great German poets into Hebrew. At the age of nineteen, he completed his first important work *Harisot Troya* (The Destruction of Troy), a translation of the third and fourth books of Virgil's Aeneid. He used, however, not the original Latin, but Schiller's German translation. The skill displayed in the translation and the stately and elastic style of the poem made a great impression upon the lovers of Hebrew, both in Russia and in Western Europe. Even the great German scholars of that generation who devoted themselves primarily to the researches of the past, could not withhold their admiration for the work of the young poet.

When he came in the year 1849 to Berlin to seek a cure from the blighting malady of tuberculosis, he found there friends and admirers. After spending a few months at Salzbrunn whither he went at the advice of physicians, he returned to Berlin and spent the year 1850 in study and writing. During his stay in that city, he became very friendly with the historian of Jewish literature, Yom-Tob Lippmann Zunz, and the brilliant scholar, Senior Sachs, who influenced him to turn from the glorification of strange gods to themes of a national character and sing the songs of Zion. He listened to their advice and during that year, he composed his historical poems which were collected and published under the name of *Shirē-Bat Zion* (The Songs of the Daughters of Zion) in 1851.

The cure he sought in Berlin and in German watering places did not come and he returned in the year 1851, broken in body and spirit, to Wilna. There he struggled for some time with his deadly malady, and in moments of alleviation, he continued to pen new songs and poems. He did not, however, live to see them published, for he died early in 1852. They were collected and issued by his father immediately after his death and given the name *Kinor Bat Zion* (The Harp of the Daughter of Zion).

The tragic life of this poetic eaglet who died before he could spread his wings to their full extent left its indelible impression upon his poetry. It is, like his father's, a poetry of struggle in life, but how different. It is not the struggle which goes on in life generally, of life in society which he pictures as an outside observer and of which he sings, but the struggle in his own soul to attain, in spite of his great handicap, life, love, and enjoyment. His is the tragic-romantic poetry of a deep-feeling soul which thirsts for the blessings of life but is conscious that they cannot be his, for he lives in the shadow of death. Like to his father, death to him was the thing most feared in the world, but while to the older man it was a matter of observation, to the younger, it was grim reality. Yet Micah Joseph was not pessimistic. Filled with a passionate desire for the pleasures of life—the very fact that they were unattainable by him made them more alluring and tempting—he often sings of them with great warmth and passion. The poetry of Micah Joseph is the poetry of youth, and he is, therefore, the lyrical bard of the Haskalah. But he is not only a lyrical poet—in fact, his *Kinor Bat Zion* contains but few lyrical poems—for he excels in semi-epical poems as well and even in philosophic ones. In him there were united both a feeling heart and an encompassing mind which endeavored to embrace the totality of things. There is also a tinge of religiosity in the few nature poems he wrote.

Because of his essentially romantic nature which strove towards the grandiose and the sublime, Micah Joseph chose for translation subjects which thrill the hearts of men either by their grandeur of action or depth of tragedy, such as the heroic poems of the *Aeneid*, the Lone Arab in the Desert (*ha-Arabi be-Midbar*), and similar themes. Because of his sympathy with the subject, he succeeded in imparting a note of originality even to his translations, and as a result, the *Harisot Troya* reads as if written originally in Hebrew. There is a Biblical ring to its rhythm and style, and part of the original pathos, which moves the heart of the reader on learning of the tragic fate of Priam and Troy, is preserved. In the free translation from the Polish of the poem the "Lone Arab in the Desert," Micah Joseph pictures the desert in words and figures remarkable for a young man who had spent his life in the streets of the Wilna ghetto. The following is an illustration:

Of all who come, none do return from here,
This wilderness of thirst

THE POETRY OF THE HASKALAH

Where even storm winds lose their way.
Here sprouts no blade of grass, no bud,
No herb, no shrub, no shred of green, no vine.
Here in the billows of unending sand
Only the serpent and the adder crawl.
What does the eye discern?
Grim carrion lying there inert
While screeching buzzards and grim vultures soar
And rage, and swoop in wrath upon their prize.
Sharp are their rending claws, and red
Their hungry mouths, with blood drained of the prey.⁶

Only the rich fantasy of a budding poetic genius could paint the distant desert in such colors and impart vividness to a scene which he had never seen.

The *Shirē Bat Zion* contains six historical poems, five dealing with Biblical characters and the sixth with Judah ha-Levi. The first two, *Shlomoh* and *Koheleth*, which represent two phases of the life of Solomon, his youth and his old age, are his master-pieces. They are really two parts of one poem. In them, young Lebensohn sang his own life song. He gave to the poems a philosophic background as indicated by the sub-title, *ha-Emunah we-ha-Hokmah* (Faith and Wisdom) which signifies that the youth of Solomon typifies pure faith in life and undisturbed enjoyment of pleasures, while his old age, the period of *Koheleth*, personifies the all-critical wisdom which blasts joy by its penetrating eye to the beyond of the passing moment. The poem *Koheleth* is a protest of the young heart of Micah against the excessive cultivation of reason by the leaders of the enlightenment. However, it is not the quasi-philosophical ideas, but the passion for life and its pleasures which permeates the first, and the stirring pathos of the second, which impart value to the poems.

In *Shlomoh*, Solomon is pictured as a youth whose purity of soul and joy of heart were not as yet defiled by passion or marred by sadness and other hazards of life. He is all-attuned to the pulsations of life and beauty of nature. Climbing the crests of Lebanon to witness a sunset, he discovers *Shulamit*, the beautiful shepherdess, and love grips him instantly. To this love the greater part of the poem is devoted. *Shlomoh* is the love poem par excellence of the Haskalah. In spite of its historical form, it is primarily lyrical in character. The

⁶ *Kol Shirē Mikal* Part III, pp. 88, 89.

youth of twenty who had hardly tasted love, sings his ode to this passion and raises it to a universal force, thus:

Brooks ripple softly as they flow,
And branches whisper at the wind's caress.
Doves murmur in their nests, and lo,
It is the voice of Love, and nothing less.⁷

Nature, hope, and simple faith come in for their share in the poem, but love is the dominating spirit.

Koheleth is the antithesis of *Shlomoh*. The king is old, not so much in years as in experience. He is weighed down not by the burden of suffering, for he had tasted of all pleasures, but by his all-discerning wisdom which reveals to him the hovering cloud behind the shining light and analyzes charm and beauty into their elements thus turning them into ugliness. The poet pictures in a masterly way the aged king contemplating the events of his life. One by one, there rise before him the past joys which doubt later turned to bitter memories. There fleets before him the scene when his beloved Shulamit, on her deathbed, turned to him with a smile and said, "Beloved, we will be united again in spirit"; and he in his doubt merely answered, "Who knows?" Thus life passes before him and he cries once more, "Vanity, all is vanity." This is the climax of the philosophic poem. But the poet is not satisfied and produces an anti-climax and makes *Koheleth* see a vision where pure faith comes to him once more, and he opens his eyes and pronounces the final dictum: "Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the whole duty of man." (Ecclesiastes, XII, 13). It is quite possible that the anti-climax detracts from the poetic quality of the poem rather than adds to it. But Micah Joseph expressed in this addition his religious feeling which was deeply rooted in him and also follows in this way the Book of Ecclesiastes which concludes with that very verse. There is much philosophy in this poem and also some imitation of Shakespeare in making Solomon utter reflections upon finding the skull of *Ētan ha-Ezrahi* (one of the Psalm singers), which closely resemble the soliloquy of Hamlet on a similar occasion. Still the pathos and tragedy resulting from a too-critical wisdom are well drawn and *Koheleth* can be considered one of the outstanding reflective poems in modern Hebrew literature.

⁷ Ibid., Part II, p. 12.

The other four poems included in this collection are *Nikmat Shimshon* (The Revenge of Samson), *Yaël we-Sisera*, *Moshe 'Al Har ha-Aborim* (Moses on Mount Aborim), and *Rabbi Yehudah ha-Levi*. The themes of the first and third are comparatively weak, while in the second and fourth, the poet rises to great heights. In *Nikmat Shimshon*, the passion for revenge on the part of Samson is forcibly expressed, but the depth of the tragedy of the hero is not fully brought out. In *Moses on Mount Aborim*, a theme frequently employed by poets, emphasis is placed upon the narration of the exploits of Moses rather than upon the depicting of the pathetic moment of death. Still there are several thrilling passages, such as the one where Moses reflects on the fact that he alone has survived of the numerous multitude he had brought out from Egypt, and that finally even he must die in the desert on the threshold of the Promised Land. Especially touching are the closing lines:

His sun has set, the leader silent lies
With love of Zion in his darkened eyes.⁸

Even in death his gaze turned in the direction of the land to which he strove all his life.

In *Yaël and Sisera*, the poet pictures in fine measured lines the struggle that goes on in the soul of Yaël before she commits her "deed of treachery" and kills Sisera, the enemy of her people. She is torn between two emotions, the strong desire to help her people and the voice of conscience which tells her that to kill a man who came to seek shelter in her tent and who placed implicit faith in her, is a crime under all conditions. She hesitates, she falters, but finally mastering herself, commits the deed. However, she finds no rest even after the act is done. She seems to hear the dying Sisera whisper "O, thou Yaël, my angel, the angel of death." And even when she hears the triumphal shouts of the victorious army of the Jews returning from the battlefield, she exclaims, "Oh, their joy is not my joy, for I killed not my warring enemy but one who sought shelter in my tent." This inner struggle is drawn by Lebensohn with great psychological insight.

In the last poem, *Yehudah ha-Levi*, Micah Joseph displays all his art. The theme deals with the journey of this lover of Zion to the Holy Land, his arrival thither, and his legendary death at the hands of an

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 60.

Arab while kneeling at the ruins of the Temple. Micah Joseph thrills us in his masterful portrayal of the burning love of the great poet for the land of his fathers, his defiance of the storm at sea, his joy on stepping on the soil of the beloved shore, and his pain at its desolation. He makes the old Bard of Zion roam the land, visit the places of former glory, the Carmel and mighty Lebanon where the tall cedars grew. But alas, ruin and desolation reign everywhere. He has him visit the graves of the prophets, the lovers of Zion whose words bespoke its glory and there sing his Zionide (Vol. I, Sec. 126). Finally, he passes before ha-Levi in a vision, a great host of the dead of Zion, among them warriors who died in its defense, prophets, and poets; and to this host the poet, who came from the far-distant land to sing the glories of old, is added when the sword of the Arab pierces his heart. His end is described in the concluding stanza:

A smile upon his lips. No fear of death
Is stamped upon the whiteness of his brow.
Here ends the poet's dream—the bitter dream.
Why do his eyes not open now?⁹

If in the historical poems contained in his first collection, young Micah, who lived in the shadow of death, merged the trepidations of his own heart with the lives and deeds of the heroes whose glories or sorrows he sang of, then in the lyrical poems collected posthumously he bares his very soul. Here we see the great tragedy of a palpitating heart which strives towards life but feels that the goal is not to be attained. In the collection, there are several reflective poems, some love songs, and a few nature poems. In his reflective poem, *ha-Tefillah* (The Prayer) we hear an echo of his father's philosophy to whom the harmony manifested in nature was the revelation of the divine spirit, but with Micah Joseph it is saturated with a greater poetic feeling. The poet is impressed with the beauty of the world as it appears on a quiet spring evening. At one moment, it seems to him that the voice of the world is the voice of prayer and that the name of God is writ on every star and every creature. He bethinks himself, however, that, after all, dead nature does not praise God, and it is only the feeling throbbing heart of man which unites with God in prayer. Appreciation of the beauty of nature and

⁹ Ibid., p. 67.

thought are combined in his poem "To the Stars." Impressed by their majesty and grandeur, he wants to wrest from them the secret of the world. The sick poet, to whom death is the greatest horror, complains to the stars of its rule on earth and wants to know whether the power of death stops at their threshold. Demanding an answer from the silent luminaries, he says:

Answer me, oh Ye who dwell on high;
This instant stop the motion of the spheres!
For weary is my soul. Sadly I cry
That man is born for sorrow and for tears.

To his query, the poet finds no answer. For centuries men have studied the constellations, but they gained no wisdom of life. Mournfully he concludes:

Silent are you, and with mute tongue you stand,
For on your lips a Mighty God has placed his hand.¹⁰

Very pathetic are his few poems on spring. The more alluring its beauty and charm, the greater is the pain of the singer knowing that he will not enjoy them for long and he cries out:

Accursed be "love of life"—accursed.
Of all man's ills, that is the worst.^{10a}

Yet he succeeded in writing a few nature poems which charm us with their simple beauty and lightness of rhythm.

The several love poems of Micah are the few rays of light which pierce through his otherwise clouded horizon. In them the young heart, thirsting for life, finds expression and some of the verses even display a note of hilarity. Yet we feel in them a lack of naturalness and a spirit of earnestness permeates even these poems.

Of his other poems, two are particularly beautiful and stir us with their lyrical pathos. These are *Doliyah Nidahat* (The Tossed Twig) and *ha-Yaldut* (Childhood). In the first, the poet sings of a twig tossed on the waters of a raging sea to no purpose and aim. To the query

¹⁰ Ibid., Part III, pp. 9, 13.

^{10a} Ibid., p. 28.

Alas, poor twig, whither go you? What marks your way?
 Forlorn you stray.
 Storm and the whirlwind know you,
 Darken your way.

the answer is given:

Once in a leafy tree, there was my home.
 Torn from a swaying branch, friendless I roam.
 Plucked from the joyous green that gave me birth,
 What is my life to me, and of what worth?
 Thus do they taunt me, with none to save,
 Prey of the whirlwind, the storm and the wave.^{10b}

This simple allegory symbolizes both the life of the poet himself and the fate of the Jewish people.

The poet, though grown old before his time, was after all removed only a short span of time from childhood, and he, therefore, pictures that age in his poem, *ha-Yaldut*, with a vividness and charm rarely found anywhere else. In it, he strikes a chord which finds response in the heart of every man and woman. Thus:

A garden of God is our childhood, each day
 A festival radiant with laughter and play,
 And angels of peace gather there in the glen,
 And tiptoe on carpets of flowers, and then
 Joy, glee and frolic and innocent fun—
 These are the blossoms that smile at the sun.
 Far from the tumult, far from the crowd,
 Only the singing of birds is allowed.
 Roofed by a heaven of purest blue,
 Earth dressed in garments of radiant hue.
 No care or sorrow, no tearful prayer
 Shatter the beauty and loveliness there.¹¹

These and other songs were emitted by the "Harp of the Daughter of Zion" when struck by the master hand of Micah Joseph. But alas, the harp fell too soon from the feeble hands of the sick poet.

39. JUDAH LEIB GORDON

Lebensohn the elder laid the foundation of the poetry of the Haskalah; his son attempted to erect on these foundations a beautiful

^{10b} Ibid., p. 71.

¹¹ Ibid., p. 50.

building adorned with the colors and delicate tints of romanticism. His work, however, was cut short by the grim hand of death, and it was left for another, a disciple of the father and a friend of the son, to complete the building. This builder did not exactly carry out the work in the spirit of Micah Joseph, though he followed him at first, but soon turned into different paths. He was of a more rugged nature, and the material he used was of a harder and more solid character and there was strength to his verse and durability to his poetry. He was the mouth-piece of the period and the typical poet of the Haskalah. In him the ideals, the strivings, and even the militant spirit with which the enlightenment was at that time permeated, found their full expression. That builder was Judah Leib Gordon, (1831-1895).

Judah Leib Gordon was born in Wilna, the spiritual capital of Lithuanian Jewry. His father, who had mastered several languages and was considered one of the enlightened, gave him a more liberal education than was customary at the time. His course of study included, besides Talmud, also instruction in Bible and Hebrew grammar. His brother-in-law, Michal Gordon, who was a full-fledged Maskil and composed poems both in Hebrew and Yiddish, introduced Judah Leib to the circles of the enlightened in Wilna and thus strengthened his inclinations to secular studies. Yet, up to his seventeenth year, he did not forsake the Talmud and kept at its study during the greater part of the day. Later, he devoted several years entirely to secular studies during which time he succeeded in mastering Polish, French, and German. At the age of twenty-two, he passed an examination as a teacher in the Jewish schools established by the government, and immediately afterward was appointed instructor in a school in Ponevyez.

Gordon felt the poetic urge early in life and at the age of twenty-one began to write his lyrical poems. He soon passed over to epics and wrote a number of historical poems. All these poems were collected by the author and first published in 1865 under the title *Shirē-Yehudah* (The Songs of Judah). However, this was not his first work, for eight years earlier (1860), he had published a collection of fables called *Mishlē Yehudah*.

For eight years, Gordon resided in Ponevyez and taught Jewish children to read and write Russian and the rudiments of mathematics. In 1861, he was transferred to Shavli where he also opened a private school for girls. He continued his literary work both in poetry and

prose. Six years later, he was promoted to the post of principal of a Jewish government school at Telshi. At that time, the militant spirit of the Haskalah began to manifest itself. The Maskilim, whose number had increased during the time and who were encouraged by the lenient policy of Alexander II towards the Jews, passed over from the defensive war for Haskalah to an offensive war on the traditional form of ghetto life and demanded reforms in that life. Gordon, who was of a bellicose nature and was thoroughly convinced of the benefits of these proposed reforms, became the leader of the offensive. In a series of articles, satirical poems, and fables, he attacked the leaders of the rigid Orthodox party for their opposition to the enlightenment, and the rabbis for their fanaticism and severity in decisions of legal questions. All his works of that time bear a polemic character and his narrative poems deal no more with the past but with the present. This activity aroused the ire of the orthodox Jews at Telshi, and they informed against him to the government. But this action made Gordon only the more belligerent and he continued to lash his opponents with his sharp pen in song, prose, and fable.

In 1872 Gordon was called to St. Petersburg to become the secretary of both the Jewish community and the Society for Spreading Enlightenment among the Jews (Mefize Haskalah). During his residence there, he was entangled in difficulties, having been falsely accused of belonging to the revolutionary party. He was arrested and was held prisoner in a fortress for forty days and later exiled to a distant town in Northern Russia. After a few months the case was cleared up and the poet was released.

On his return to the capital in 1880, he devoted himself to journalistic work, and for eight years he was a contributing editor of the Hebrew semi-weekly and later the daily, *ha-Meliz*. After leaving the *ha-Meliz*, he engaged for some time in various journalistic works in Hebrew and Russian. In 1891 the poet became fatally sick with cancer. He went to Berlin where he was operated upon but to no avail, and within a year, at the end of the summer of 1892, he died. During his stay in the capital, he continued to write poems, but he also devoted a great part of his time to prose. He wrote novels, feuilletons, light essays, and articles in encyclopaedias. In 1884 his admirers published a complete edition of all his poems in four volumes. This mark of tribute gave him great satisfaction, but his spirit was perturbed during the last years of his life. The

pogroms of 1882 and the resulting persecution of the Jews shattered all the hopes and ideals of a life time. The movement of enlightenment to which he had devoted so much energy and which he, together with the other Maskilim, had hoped would prove a means of salvation for the Jews, ended in failure and the hope for Jewish emancipation became an idle dream. The new ideal of nationalism, which began to gather strength in the eighties of the last century, did not attract him, and though he flirted with it occasionally, he was not warmed by its glow. Thus, left without ideals and strivings, his literary productivity of the last period of his life lacked the vigor and fire of former years.

Gordon, as we have seen, was a versatile writer. He wrote, with equal facility, poems, novels, feuilletons, and essays, for probably the element of the greatest value in his entire literary activity is his all-encompassing mastery of the Hebrew style. He was the master of Hebrew *par excellence*, for he was at home in all branches of Jewish literature and drew upon its treasures in a prodigious manner. The Hebrew language in his hands became elastic and he kneaded it into many forms. Gordon was one of the few writers of the Haskalah to break away from the narrow path trodden by his predecessors, namely the clinging to the pure Biblical style. He utilized the Agada, the Mishnah, and Mediaeval Hebrew literature and produced a unique style suited to and pliable for all forms of literary expression. Still, in spite of his literary diversity, his claim to fame rests almost entirely upon his poetic productivity.

However, he carried his versatility even into poetry. He wrote lyrics, epics, satires, narrative, polemic poems, and fables. This manifoldness of poetic activity makes the estimate of Gordon's genius a difficult matter, for the brilliancy of his style and the dexterity of his skill in manipulating the Hebrew language covers up many a triviality of content and makes the shallowness of feeling appear deep. One thing, however, is clear, namely that Gordon is not a lyric poet. He lacked the insight into the individual soul, the depth of feeling of a soul attuned to the finer side of life and the grandeur of the universe. Hence, we find no love poems in his lyrics nor any nature poems. The fine descriptions of nature which are scattered in his historical poems are not the expressions of a soul enraptured with the beauty of nature, but are the product of a rich imagination and unsurpassing mastery of language. He is, like the elder *Lebensohn*, a poet of life, not of the mysteries and struggles of the individual,

but of the seething life of the group, of its problems and vicissitudes. But while Lebensohn dealt with the injustice and suffering found in life in general, Gordon is primarily interested in Jewish life both in the past and in the present.

The analysis of his own soul is used by Gordon as a theme of one of his poems entitled *Shoresh Nishmati* (The Source of my Soul). He ponders upon its character and asks:

The soul you gave me, God, whence did it come? How odd!
If it were new when first you blew its breath into my clay,
Why, in so brief a day is it so scarred?
And thus my soul has learned to know
Its own pain, and its nation's woe.
It must be, then, that ancient is each scar—the wounds that mar,
All, all were there—each gaping tear,
When first it entered me.

Perhaps of Anathot,* the wailing seer,
You drew the wounded soul, to thrust it here,
Oh, God, of all its wounds, heal Thou my soul,
Or take it from me, back to You.
And then endow me with a soul that's new.¹²

In this poem we get a glimpse into the poet's soul. It is weighed down by the sorrow of his people, by frustrated desires to improve its ways and change its form of life for the better. But it is also the soul of a rebel. The wounds are wounds of war, for Gordon was primarily the poet of the Haskalah, the mouth-piece of those who struggled to change Jewish life in the face of strong opposition. Hence, he is the master of satire and of the narrative polemic poem.

This analysis, though, presents only one phase of the poet's soul. He had also another soul, a more delicate and noble one. He really felt a deep love for his people and sensed the pathos of its suffering throughout history and was capable to appreciate its great moments. Nor was he entirely devoid of feeling for the charms of idyllic nature, the tragedy of life, and the power of love. Added to this, he was endowed with a rich imagination and great power of description. Accordingly, he was also the master of the epos and even succeeded in producing occasionally beautiful idylls.

* Jeremiah.

¹² *Kol Shirē* (Collected poems) Book V, pp. 29, 30.

The poetic productivity of Gordon, which lasted for forty years, can be roughly divided into two periods, the romantic and the realistic. To the first belong most of the lyrical, the epical, and historical poems, and to the second the narrative poems which deal with contemporary life and always possess a polemic coloring. To the second period belong also his short satirical poems and a few of the lyrical. His fables belong to both periods. He began his historical poems with a long epic based on the life of David and entitled *Ahabat David u-Mikal* (The Love of David and Mikal, the daughter of Saul). The life of David was a favorite subject with the poets of the Modern Period, and no wonder that our poet tried his hand at it again. He limited his theme, however, to the love episode between the shepherd and the king's daughter. The poem is divided into twelve cantos, touching upon various incidents in the life of David and Saul, but they all center about the love between the two principal figures. It is quite evident that Gordon was influenced by the younger Lebensohn, and in this epic, he tries to imitate the latter in his poem *Shlomoh*. Like him, he sings a hymn to love which animates all beings and signs of direct imitation are evident in a number of passages in the poem. The real heroine of the poem is Mikal. It is her unwavering love for David through all vicissitudes and changes which is glorified. David, in the days of his glory as a victorious king, becomes cool towards Mikal who is childless, but she remains true to him. She leaves the palace and returns to her native city of Gibah and watches from a distance the deeds of her beloved. The end is very pathetic. At the moment when David dies in his luxurious palace at Jerusalem, Mikal expires under the very tree where she and David had sworn eternal love, and their souls meet at the gates of heaven. The innovations of the poet are justified by him on the basis of his interpretation of the verses in the Bible telling the story of David and Mikal. The epic, though it does not rise to poetic heights, is replete with fine descriptions of nature and life. The descriptive powers of Gordon and his remarkable gift of style are not yet fully developed in this poem, but they are already in evidence. There are also attempts to inject, in the manner of the Lebensohns, philosophic and religious thoughts, presenting the concatenation of events as the realization of a predetermined divine plan, and also to interweave in the web of the poem several psalms which give it a religious tinge. On the whole, the epic is a youthful work of Gordon and has many shortcomings; still

it is one of the best Biblical poems produced in modern Hebrew literature.

An historical poem of a much higher character, which displays a further step in the development of Gordon's genius, is "David and Barzilai," also based on an incident in the life of David. This incident was likewise treated by earlier poets, such as Shalom ha-Cohen (Sec. 24) and others, but in the hands of our bard, it assumed an exalted form. The theme is taken from II Samuel XVII, 27, and XIX, 32-40, where it is told that David, when fleeing from his rebellious son, Absalom, found refuge at Mahanaim in Transjordan and was supplied with provisions by a rich landowner, Barzilai from Gilead. When the rebellion ended and the king was about to return to the capital, he invited Barzilai to come and dwell with him. Barzilai declined his offer on the plea of old age. It is the second meeting between the prince and the farmer which is described in the poem, and the contrast between the quiet life of the rural landlord and the life of splendor but also of turbulence of the king is the main motive. In this poem, though much shorter than his first epic, Gordon succeeded in producing several beautiful idyllic pictures both of nature and pastoral life. He thus describes the life of Barzilai in his rural retreat:

He sees the changes of the eve and morn
Beholds the sun now dying, now reborn,
The starry hosts that tacitly proclaim
The glories of Jehovah's awful name;
And in his heart he feels there is a plan
There is a refuge for the soul of man.
And full of faith and full of hope divine
He placid sees the days of life decline.¹³

Very stirring is his depiction of the meeting between the two old men, the king and Barzilai. The former pleads with his benefactor to accompany him to Jerusalem, but the landowner points out that the peace of his domain is far better than the magnificence of a regal palace, for

Better is a poor but peaceful life
Than a crown accompanied by strife.¹⁴

¹³ Ibid., Book III, p. 151. Translation taken from A. B. Rhine's, "Leon Gordon," p. 115.

¹⁴ Ibid., p. 156.

Osnath Bat Potifera (Osnath, the daughter of Potifera) is the last of his Biblical poems. The love between Joseph and Osnath who, according to the Agada, was the daughter of his master, is the theme of the poem. The hero is Joseph, the slave who is destined to reign, and the poem relates in nine short cantos the vicissitudes of his life from the day he was sold as a slave to the time he became vice-regent of Egypt. We are told of his arrival at the house of Potifera, the passion which was enkindled in the heart of his mistress Zelika when she saw him, of his meeting with Osnath, still a child at the time, of the love that gradually developed between the slave and the master's daughter, and of his struggle against the consuming passion of Zelika. The poem, as a whole, is narrative, and no special psychological insight into the soul of the characters is attempted. Its beauty consists mainly in the powerful description of nature as well as certain scenes of Egyptian life such as the sale of slaves in the mart. It is here where the poet utilized his rich imagination in describing the natural beauty of Egypt and the splendor of the palace of Potifera, the Egyptian magnate, scenes which he had never set eyes upon but portrayed from descriptions in books. Nevertheless the poet succeeded in impressing us with their charm.

With this poem, Gordon took leave of the romantic and turned to the more vigorous and more tragic moments of Jewish history. The other four historical poems of his are really ballads. They represent struggle which ends in disaster, in defeat, and in failure. In these, our poet attained his height, and in fact, never surpassed himself, for strife was the very element of his soul. He was not interested in the victory of righteousness over injustice, or of truth over falsehood. The clash of forces, the urge to conquer and overcome obstacles, the strength of soul in face of danger, these are the moments which attracted him. Of course, there is always an ideal background to the struggle, and not a mere display of force. It is the ideal for the sake of which the strife goes on that supplies the pathos and the tragedy.

The first of the historical ballads is the *Bēn Shinē Aroyot* (Between the Teeth of the Lions). The poem describes the tragic fate of a Jewish warrior who fought against the Romans at Jerusalem, was taken captive and placed by them in the arena to fight a hungry lion. It is divided into four cantos. In the first, we are introduced to the fierce war raging between a people fighting to the last for its liberty and the proud conquering Romans. The canto opens with

a rebellious outburst of the poet against the over-spiritualization of Israel and the neglect of the leaders to teach the people tactics of war. This is the protest of the Haskalah against the narrowing of Jewish life to "the four ells of the Halakah," a protest of which we will hear more and more. It is uttered vigorously and with a tinge of biting satire, but it is not entirely in harmony with the spirit of the poem and enhances neither its beauty nor its strength. The second canto represents a pathetic scene, the parting of the hero, Simon, who is returning to the front, from his beloved, Martha. Here the poet displays much feeling for this human tragedy and concludes his canto with these words addressed to God:

All-Seeing Eye, have you seen these tears,
And will you gather them within a jar?
Or vain were they, and vain e'en now, they are?
And they that poured each bitter drop, will they
From death and dungeon see the light of day—
Each rise to find himself no more a slave
And greet each other e'er they go
Into the grave?¹⁵

They were destined to meet once again and even to die at the same moment, but under what circumstances! Martha, like Simon, was taken captive and sold as a slave to a Roman mistress whom she accompanied to the arena to witness the fight of her lover with an enraged lion. Cantos four and five are devoted to the portrayal of this scene. Here Gordon rises to great heights; his description of the amphitheatre, the festal crowd who came to enjoy the sight of a hero torn by the claws of a lion, is masterful. The climax is reached by the poet when he depicts the hateful struggle between the captive armed with a short blade and the fierce lion. Gordon, who had probably seen a live lion once or twice in his life describes the animal and his hunting instincts with the precision of a naturalist, thus:

The stalker paused, regarded well his prey
(As though to judge the fitness of the prize
To grace the table of a king) and then resumed his way,
Stamping the earth with fearful tread,
Circling with baleful eye and lowered head the prey,

¹⁵ Ibid., p. 179.

Nor once did he remove his gaze;
 So like a spy, intent to find the lack
 Of but a moment's vigil in a siege of days,
 And in that instant leap to the attack.

Not less vigorous is his description of Simon who strikes at the lion with the blade. In vain does the unfortunate one exert his strength, his blade strikes a bone and breaks. Back comes the lion at his prey. At that moment Simon meets the eye of Martha and with renewed strength throws himself upon the lion. Here the poet interferes and exclaims,

Lost hero, have you not considered this—
 Where is your God, the God of Samson—where?
 Yes, He, the God of Samson and the strong
 Heeds not His people's nor His hero's prayer.¹⁶

The tragedy draws to a close; the lion is the victor; the people break forth in shouts of glee, interrupted only by a single cry of pain, the cry of Martha whose soul has fled to join that of her lover. The poem expresses the anguish of the poet at the lost glory of his nation, at the departure of its strength and heroism, never to return.

Very stirring is his second historical ballad *be-Mezulot Yam* (In the Depths of the Sea). The theme is the suffering of the exiles from Spain. On one of the boats, carrying a motley of exiles to lands unknown, there are also two women, the wife and daughter of Abu-Shoam, Rabbi of Tortosa, who was killed during the attacks upon the Jews. The daughter, Penina, though dressed in mourner's weeds and bowed down with sorrow, is yet distinguished by her beauty which captivates the heart of the captain. When repulsed by her, he threatens to land all the Jews on a barren island and let them die there of hunger and thirst. The unfortunate troop around Penina and ask her whether the rumor is true. Penina, like the heroines of old, resolves to sacrifice herself for the sake of her brethren and promises her hand to the captain. The passengers are landed safely on the coast of North Africa, but Penina and her mother remain on the boat. In the night, the two women jump into the sea, preferring a watery grave to dishonor.

¹⁶ Ibid., pp. 181, 185, 188.

Here Gordon finds ample room for bewailing the misfortunes of his people. His deep feeling for the eternal tragedy of the Jew is expressed in these noble lines:

Who are you, shapeless mass of exiles?
Do not their faces tell the story?
Then, why the query?
Chaff fleeing wind-tossed from the threshing floor,
Doves seeking refuge as the vultures soar.
From fire they leap into the yawning waves;
From gallows, to the squalid mart of slaves.¹⁷

He does not dwell much though upon the struggle in the soul of Penina between her desire for life and her sense of duty. She accepts her fate with a heroic resignation; but the poet cannot restrain his rebellious spirit at the purposeless suffering of Israel and speaks through the mouth of his heroine:

But, tell me, Mother, why does God pursue us?
What sin of ours has brought this evil fate,
And why, of all the nations were we chosen
The target of the arrows of His hate?

The depth of the tragedy of the heroine and her mother, which in a way is symbolic of the fate of the people as a whole, is expressed in the following lines, tinged with bitter irony, describing the drowning of the women:

The ocean saw and fled, its waters quaking;
And mighty waves in white-foamed wrath were breaking,
As these two spirits, purer far than gold,
Sank in the awful depths; above them rolled
The angry waters, but there in the deep,
On valleys of the ocean floor asleep,
They found a grave within the ocean's breast.
Their monument? Near sunken rocks they rest.
Their vault? The heavens and the stars of old
To write their story there in twinkling gold.
No eye to see, to weep—only the cold,
Grey dawn of morning may behold
Them as they sleep;

¹⁷ Ibid., p. 192.

A cloud-rimmed moon, earth's silent eye,
That views the bier
Of all that lived,
And yet sheds not a tear.¹⁸

The last of his historical ballads is the *Zidkiyahu be-Bet ha-Pekudot* (Zedekiah in Prison). This poem describes the tragedy of the last king of Judah who was taken captive and saw his children slain before he was blinded. It is a monologue of complaint and rebellion, written by Gordon, while he was in prison as a result of a false accusation brought against him by some enemies of a fanatical turn of mind. His heart was full of bitterness against the fanatical rabbis and against all opponents of Haskalah who were excessive in their religious zeal and he poured it out in this poem, making Zedekiah his mouth-piece. It is the epitome of Gordon's long struggle against the numerous fences around the law which resulted in the narrowing of Jewish life and in the removing from it all vestiges of secularization. He makes Zedekiah utter a long tirade against the priests and prophets who wanted to convert the country into a school and synagogue. The king is pictured here not, as in the Bible, as a vacillating creature, the instrument of his nobles, but as a victim of circumstances, as the representative of secular civilization who was thwarted in his efforts by the bearers of the spirit, especially by the prophet Jeremiah. That Gordon was not justified in his views of the prophets, that he misjudged Jeremiah, the man whose heart bled for his people, goes without saying. He himself knew it, probably more than anyone else. Still the poem is of interest as an expression of protest against the Book by a man who was himself a man of the book rather than of deeds. It is in tune with his other realistic poems which are, one and all, the battle-cry of the Haskalah. It is worth while noting that this misrepresentation of Biblical Jewish history which he expressed in championing the cause of the king against the prophets was repeated a generation later by Micah Joseph Berdichevsky who, like Gordon, was a former *Yeshibah Bahur*, a man who knew little of life.

With this poem, Gordon's interest in historical poems ends. Henceforth he devoted himself to realistic productivity, or as he called it, *Shirē 'Alilah mi-Koret Yomēnu* (Narrative Poems of our own Times). In a series of long poems, he depicts tragic incidents

¹⁸ Ibid., pp. 200, 202.

of life caused either by the extreme severity of the application of Jewish law or by the unjust actions of the leaders of Jewish communities at the time. In these poems, the poet gave expression to the militant tendency of the Haskalah which advocated slight changes in Jewish law and demanded especially the modification of special severities (*Humrot*) which often caused great suffering to the individuals. The Lithuanian rabbis with their adherence to the letter of the law and their opposition to any secularization of Jewish life were the special targets of Gordon. In all his realistic poems, and at times even in his lyrics, he attacks the severe legal attitude of the rabbis. He, however, does not fail to see the other faulty aspects in Jewish life, namely the mismanagement of communal affairs by the leaders and even the unsatisfactory results of the Haskalah movement, which in the seventies of the last century, had become quite evident. One of the results was the introduction in Jewish life of a new type of rabbi, the government rabbi. These young spiritual leaders were graduates of the Rabbinical Seminaries established by the government in Zhitomer and Wilna. These institutions proved a failure to the great disappointment of the Maskilim. Their graduates could by no means take the place of the older rabbis, for their ignorance of Jewish learning was considerable, and they became either teachers in government schools or government rabbis, whose business was to represent the Jews before the government. They were, on the whole, a very unpleasant type, and the greed of one of these rabbis is the theme of one of Gordon's poems.

There are five of these realistic narrative poems, but only three can be considered poetic creations, while the other two are really satirical feuilletons in rhyme. These two are: *Ashaḳo de-Rispaḳ* (The Axle of a Wheel) and *we-Somaḥto B'Hageḳa* (Rejoice in thy Holiday). The theme of the first is the rigor of the Passover laws. The story runs as follows: Eliphelet, the wagon-driver, worked exceedingly hard for weeks in order to provide for the Passover holidays. When he finally sits down with his family to the Seder and is about to begin the ceremony with great pomp, his wife discovers a grain of barley in the soup. She is about to run to the rabbi and ask for his decision, but the husband sensing the danger of losing the delectable meal if it be declared *Homez*, restrains her from going. Eliphelet and the children eat their meal, but the pious woman fasts that Seder-night. The next morning,

two more grains are discovered and the woman goes to the rabbi and tells him the sad story. The rabbi applies the rigor of the law and decides that the entire Passover food as well as the utensils are all *Homez*. The family thus remains without food, and the wife, fearing her husband's wrath, appeals to the rabbi. The guardian of the law, according to the story, instead of sending food and utensils to the poor family sends two beables to arrest Eliphelet so that he would not punish his wife. The result is that the family peace is disrupted, and ultimately the woman is divorced by her husband and she thus pays for her piety. The poet strives with all his might to turn this incident into a human tragedy, but he fails to stir us and arouse our wrath against the rigorous rabbi. There is much exaggeration in the story, for seldom has it happened in such cases that a family should not be provided with food by the communal charity institutions or by good-hearted neighbors. In having the wagon-driver object to his wife's consulting the rabbi, Gordon wanted to express the revolt of the common man against the burden of the law. Even the very name of the poem is an exaggeration. It is taken from the Talmud (Tr. Gittin, 55b) where the legend is told that on account of a broken axle of a wheel, the great city of Beter was destroyed. The meaning of the legend is that small things at times cause great disasters, but the comparison implied in the title of the poem is certainly grotesque.

Still less successful as a poetic composition is the second poem. The theme deals once more with the severity of the law. The story tells about a man Kalman who was away from his home for more than seven years. His children meanwhile had grown up and his eldest daughter was about to be engaged on the last day of Succoth. He speeds home, but on account of bad roads, arrives on the eve of the holiday at a place but a few miles distant from his home town. Being a pious man, he dismounts and celebrates the Feast in the little village. His family is disappointed, and the parents of the fiancé become angry and refuse to go on with the betrothal. As a result, the daughter remains unmarried. Again, the poet wants to show the excessive rigor of the law since walking beyond a certain limit (*Tehum*, i.e. two thousand ells) is only a Rabbinical severity, and thus trivial points of the law caused misfortune to a family. But here too there is gross exaggeration for a match would not be dissolved on that account, as the parents of the fiancé would hardly blame Kalman for his piety. The poet attempts to inject

tragedy in his story by his rhetorical description of Kalman's sorrow at failing to meet his beloved ones on the holiday, but to no avail. We may just as well admire the stoicism of Kalman who, though so near his goal, refrains from transgressing the law.

Of much greater poetic value, human interest, and pathos are the other three poems, especially *Koẓo Shel Yod* (The Point of a Yod). Here the theme deals with a point of the law and the target of the biting satire is the rabbi who sticks to the letter of the law even at the cost of causing deep suffering to an innocent person, a victim of circumstances. In this poem, Gordon worked on a larger scale and succeeded both in depicting the entire life of the generation and to create, with much psychological insight, a fine picture of a Jewish woman.

The story tells of a beautiful young woman, Bat-Shua—Gordon always chooses Biblical names for his heroes and heroines—who was betrothed to a young Talmudic scholar by the name of Hillel. The bridegroom is pictured as ugly, inexperienced, and ignorant of all worldly affairs. The couple were at first supported by the father-in-law, but when the latter's fortune declined Hillel was compelled to find a means of livelihood for himself and his wife. After spending some time in a vain search for work, Hillel left for other lands and the beautiful Bat-Shua opened a small store from which she supported herself and her children. Years passed and no word came from Hillel, and Bat-Shua became an *Agunah*. To aggravate matters, her father died and she remained alone in the world.

At this juncture a streak of light illumined Bat-Shua's dark horizon. Fabi, the foreman of the construction work of a railroad which was to pass through the desolate little town, made the acquaintance of Bat-Shua. The acquaintance ripened into mutual love, and Fabi took steps to free Bat-Shua from her marital bonds so that he might marry her. He found out that Hillel resided in Liverpool and through a friend, he succeeded in obtaining a divorce for the price of five hundred dollars. The desired day arrived, the divorce bill was received, and with palpitating hearts, the lovers awaited the final ceremony. But alas, their hopes were not to be realized. The name Hillel in the divorce bill was written without a "Yod" and Rabbi Wofsie, before whom the divorce came up, following the rigorousness of the law, decided that the name must be written in full and declared the bill void. The assistants of the Rabbi cited authorities to the contrary and pleaded with him, but he was

adamant, basing his decision on the opinion of one of the codifiers; as a result, Bat-Shua remained an *Agunah* the rest of her life. Thus, the lives of two young people were shattered on account of the point of a "Yod." Gordon purposely chose the name Hillel which when vocalized is always written without a Yod, but since the bill of divorce is written without vowels, some authorities insist upon inserting a Yod. He thus wanted to show the narrow-mindedness of the rabbis who carry the point of severity to extremes.

The value of the poem consists, however, not in the story but in other elements and primarily in the portrayal of the heroine. The beauty and the noble character of Bat-Shua are described with great skill. The contrast between her beauty and nobility of character and her life as a poor *Agunah*, forced to sell goods at the railroad station, is very pathetic. Her nobility is displayed in her refusal to take aid from her lover after the divorce is declared void. She resigns herself to her bitter lot, protesting silently against the cruel decision, and the poet has her say, "Oh, the point of the Yod killed my life and hopes." Gordon opens his poem with a long canto on the fate of the Jewish woman.

Eternal bondage is the Jewesses' life.
Her shop she tends day by day.
A mother she—she nurses and she weans,
And bakes and cooks and fades away.¹⁹

This picture which was true of the Jewish woman over sixty years ago made a great impression in its time but has little permanent value. The poet expresses in this poem his wrath against the ills prevalent in the Jewish life of the age, satirizing the custom of marrying off young people without consulting their wishes, and the selection of husbands on the basis of their Talmudic learning without considering their capability to earn a living. His sharpest barbs of satire are directed against the rabbi who is pictured as cruel and heartless. It was already pointed out by Ahad ha-Am that Gordon was unjust to the rabbi and that Rabbi Wofsie's heart ached probably as painfully as that of Gordon's at the fate of Bat-Shua, but that he placed his duty to the Law above feeling. Still, in spite of the evident tendency of the poet, *Kozo Shel-Yod* is the best of his realistic poems. It expresses forcibly the protest of the

¹⁹ Ibid., Book IV, p. 5. Translation taken from Rhine's "Leon Gordon," p. 124.

generation against an excessive enslavement to the letter of the law, even if it is actuated by pious motives. Bat-Shua is one of the fine types of Jewish women created in modern Hebrew poetry.

The second long realistic poem is *Shenē Yoseph ben Shimeon* (Two Men named Joseph ben Simon).^{*} The theme deals with the mismanagement of communal affairs by the leaders who are ready to commit all crimes for a bribe. The story pictures two people, one by the name of Joseph, the son of a pious and scholarly man, who distinguished himself as a prodigious Talmudic scholar (Ilui) in his youth and who later turned to secular studies and entered a famous university to study medicine. The other whose real name was Uri, the son of Johanan the shoemaker, was noted in his youth for his evil disposition and wild conduct. When he became older, he turned to a life of crime and became a horse-thief. Fearing detection, he decided to leave the country, and requested the head of the Jewish community to give him a passport under a false name. His request, re-enforced by bribe, was granted and a document was issued in the name of Joseph, the son of Simon. As a result, the student and scholar, the real Joseph, on his return from abroad, is arrested as a thief and murderer, and in spite of all his protestations, is brought to trial and sentenced to exile in Siberia. The poet, as in his other realistic poems, tries his utmost to make the episode a tragic one. He pictures with great skill the nobility of character of the real Joseph ben Simon, the anxiety of his mother for his return; and to cap the tragedy, brings the son home in chains at the moment when the funeral of his mother takes place, and while the cortege is passing, the prisoner meets his father. But all his labors are in vain, the episode is of a prosaic character and fails to stir us. The only poetic element in the poem is the masterful description of the thirst of young Jews for knowledge and learning. Thus:

How strong art thou, all-conquering desire
To know, in youthful Jewish minds ingrained;
Upon the shrine thou art the constant fire.

Upon the roads to Jewish schools that lead
Behold poor youths with all speed,

^{*} The title is borrowed from Talmudic legal phraseology where it is used to designate a similarity of names on the part of two men, and as a reason to exercise caution in establishing the identity of the signer of a note.

And misery, the cold bare floor their bed.
 And what awaits them there? A life of need
 Such is the law, and what if one fall dead?²⁰

It is lines like these which formed the prototype of the *ha-Matmid*, the great hymn to the diligent Jewish student by the celebrated poet of our own time, Hayyim Nahman Bialik. Gordon interwove in this poem many of his satiric shafts against the rabbis and against the incompetent evil-minded leaders of the Kahal (the community), but their barbs have long lost their point through the vicissitudes in Jewish life.

Of still less poetic value is the last of his narrative realistic poems, *Shomeret Yabam*. Its theme is taken from the law of Levirate marriage, namely that if the husband die without issue, the wife must either marry the brother-in-law or go through the ceremony of *Halizah*. In order to get out of the difficulty, the fatally sick husband is often persuaded to grant the wife a divorce before death. An episode of this kind is pictured in the poem. The loving husband upon his death-bed consents, after much persuasion, to grant a divorce to his young wife who is childless. When the government rabbi is appealed to for a permit* for the divorce, he asks a prohibitive payment for his services. In vain does the poor woman plead poverty; this enlightened rabbi is not moved. Meanwhile the husband dies, and the widow is left waiting for her brother-in-law who is only one month old to grow up and free her through the ceremony of *Halizah*. In this case, the satire is directed against the enlightened rabbi, the product of the Haskalah, who is pictured by Gordon as insensible to the suffering of the people as Rabbi Wofsie was in the case of the point of the Yod. But while Wofsie can at least plead piety, excessive as it may be, as his defense, the former is only actuated by greed. Thus Gordon in his realistic poems, acted the role of the chastising prophet of his people, enumerating the evils of all, of the unenlightened as well as of the enlightened.

Besides these poems, Gordon wrote a large number of lyrics, satiric poems, and occasional epigrams. His satires are sharp and witty, and when intended for polemic purposes exceedingly pointed, and though their content has no meaning for us any more, the

²⁰ Ibid., p. 101. Translation taken from Rhine's "Leon Gordon," p. 139.

* Under the Czarist regime, the government rabbi took charge of Jewish vital statistics, and no legal document of such nature could be issued without his permit.

brilliancy of language and their wit make them interesting even to readers of our generation. As a lyrical poet, he is quite weak. His nature songs are permeated by the same spirit as that of the elder Lebensohn who sees in the manifestations of the universe evidence of a harmonious plan of the Creator. However, when the theme of his lyric song is his nation's woes or his own sorrow at its fate, he rises to great heights, for Gordon, like all poets of the Haskalah, was primarily a social poet. His best lyrics are therefore the following: *Lemi Ani Omel* (For Whom Do I Labor), *Ahoti Ruḥama* (with reference to Hosea, Ch. II, 3), and *be-Nearenu u-bi-Zekenenu* (Young and Old). In the first, which was written in 1880, when the wave of assimilation in Russia had reached its crest, and the enlightened, who had urged their people to turn to secular knowledge, saw their ideals shattered, Gordon utters his cry of disappointment. He asks "For whom do I labor?" The young have forgotten their tradition, their language, and ideals. Few, very few have remained true to Hebrew, and to these he pours out his heart and in despair exclaims:

Who can foretell if this be true—
Perhaps the last of Zion's bards am I,
And the last readers—you.²¹

His prophecy did not come true, yet the pathos of disappointment at seeing a life's labor lost and ideals shattered is genuine and moving.

The second poem, written after the pogroms in 1882, is a message to the defiled sister—Russian Jewry—. The poet says to Ruḥama:

Why wailest thou, O sister dear,
And wherefore do thy spirits droop?
Thy rosy cheeks why wan and sear?
Thou wast defiled by a bestial troop
If fists prevail, if cowards assault
O sister dear, is that thy fault?²²

The third was written in the same year, at the time of the incipency of the national movement. He was not, as was pointed out, attracted by it. His fault-finding tendency blinded him from

²¹ Ibid., Book I, p. 104.

²² Ibid., p. 117. Translation taken from Rhine's "Leon Gordon," p. 152.

seeing the latent power of the Jewish people, but in a moment of exultation, he penned this song. In it, he emphasizes the unity of the Jewish people despite their divergency of opinion. There is a breath of confidence in its stanzas which thrills the heart of every Jew. It opens as follows:

We are one people, and our God is One;
 From one source, from one fountain poured,
 One law, one language. Golden as the sun
 Are all the bonds that bind us—the eternal cord
 Ties us together triple, firm, and strong.
 With our young and our old we shall march along.
 Let the storm rage and the wind blow high,
 And the hungry waves claw at the sky.

Fear not, oh, Jacob, and bow not your head,
 For hate still stains the fields with red.
 From out of the storm, God calls, "Be strong!"
 With our young and our old, we shall march along.²⁸

We have not yet exhausted all the poetic capabilities of Gordon. There is still one phase left in which he is sole master and still remains unsurpassed in modern Hebrew literature, that is, as fabulist. Gordon published in 1860 his *Mishlê Yehudah* in four books, and later added more fables. It is true that most of them are translations from La Fontaine, Krylow, and others, but a considerable number are elaborations of Talmudic and Midrashic anecdotes recast in an original form, and some are entirely original. Even the translated fables can be considered original creations for the foreign content assumed in the hands of Gordon a typically Jewish form. Gordon, who distinguished himself as a narrative, didactic, and satirical poet, found in the fable a field for the exercise of all these qualities. Hence, he was able to take the universal content of the fables and knead it in his particular way until it suited his purpose and yielded a moral applicable to his time and generation. In the animal fables which constitute the larger part of the book, the animals are Judaized; their language is not only Biblical, but they often turn very neatly a Talmudic phrase or maxim. His swallow does not fly south but East or to Egypt to study astronomy and the wisdom of the ancients; and the ass quotes Scriptures and prides

²⁸ Ibid., pp. 115, 116.

itself upon its descent from Balaam's ass. At times, the novelty consists in the application, for the poet never omits to draw the moral from the fable. At other times, he adds also a prologue where a didactic lesson is propounded to which the fable serves as an illustration. In places where the content cannot be well-Judaized, there is at least a Jewish background to the story. The names of the mountains and the valleys are, as a rule, taken from the Bible; it is on the mountains of Gilead, Carmel, and Lebanon where his deer roam, and in the valleys of the Sharon and Jezreel where his animals play and frolic.

The few original fables composed by Gordon are drawn from the Bible. With remarkable skill, he transforms several Biblical episodes, in themselves insignificant, into well-constructed parables which yield a fine moral and practical application. One of these deserves mention. The poet took the story told in I Samuel VI, 12, of the cows drawing the Ark of God when it was returned by the Philistines and converted it into a fable. He pictures the pride of the kine on their march, the people bowing and prostrating themselves before them; they think that the honor is intended for them. But alas, when the Ark arrives at its destination, it is reverently removed and the cows are slaughtered as a sacrifice. (The application is clear—many empty-headed people, when cooperating with real noble men in their labors attribute much of the honor to themselves, when in reality, it belongs to the worthy ones).

In casting a backward glance upon the poetic activity of Gordon, we may say that he was poet par excellence of the Haskalah. None will dispute it, for it was he who gave the clearest and strongest expression to its protests against existing conditions in Jewish life, and to its ideals, and strivings. In his time, he exerted the greatest influence possible for a poet. His poems were not only read but memorized, and lines, expressions, and bon mots, taken from his numerous poems, were proverbial. But he was more than that. There is an element of permanency in his work. It is true that most of his realistic poems have lost their point and the polemic content has become not only obsolete, but at times even arouses a smile. His long prologue to the "Point of the Yod" where he bewails the pathetic lot of the Jewish woman sounds to us naive and simple, and similarly his other problems have long ago been solved by life itself. The power of the rabbis is but nil, and their legal severity only a memory. Yet some of his historical poems, especially the

Bēn Shinē Aroyot and the *be-Mezulot Yam* are of permanent value. Then there are his fables in which he is unsurpassed to the present day, and above all, there is his skill of language and brilliancy of style. It was he who produced the wonderful blend of the Biblical and Talmudic idioms and thus paved the way for the poets of our own time. There is no doubt that the poems of Gordon served as a model to the late Bialik, the poet laureate of our own generation, whose elastic yet powerful style added much to the charm of his poetry. Bialik was also influenced by the older poet in the content of his poems. The spirit of revolt against the apathy of the Jews to their fate and their neglect to arouse themselves for their salvation also reverberates in the stately lines of the younger poet. Gordon influenced also other poets and writers besides Bialik; practically the entire later generation of writers, both in prose and poetry, was under the sway of that bard of the Haskalah in one way or another. He thus deserves an honored place among the poets of Israel of all generations.

40. ABRAHAM BAER GOTTLOBER, JUDAH LEVIN (YE-
HALEL), AND SOLOMON MANDELKERN

The two Lebensohns and Gordon are undoubtedly the leading triad of bards of the Haskalah. But they were only the leaders of a host of poets and would-be poets, and next to them in importance both from the point of productivity and poetic quality is another triad of poets all of whom were considered masters of song by their generation. These are Abraham Baer Gottlober, Judah Levin, and Solomon Mandelkern.

i. Abraham Baer Gottlober (1810-1899) was born in Old-Constantin, Volhynia, and in his youth sojourned in Galicia, where through his association with the enlightened, he was introduced to the Haskalah. He returned to Russia and engaged in teaching in the Jewish schools established by the government. He did not, however, stay long in one place changing positions very frequently, and his life was thus spent in wandering from city to city. From the years 1865 to 1875, he taught Talmud in the Rabbinical Seminary at Zhitomer. Later, he turned editor and for five years (1876-1881) he published and edited a Hebrew monthly, *ha-Boqer Or* (The Light of the Morning), a periodical which was, both in its title and contents, an unsuccessful imitation of Smolenskin's *ha-Shahar* (The Dawn).

His literary productivity was likewise varied; he wrote novels, short stories, publicistic essays, critical reviews, historical treatises and many poems. His first collection of poems was issued in 1835 under the name *Pirhe ha-Abib* (Spring Flowers). This was followed by a second collection *ha-Nizanim* (The Sproutings) in 1851, and by a third *Kol Rinah* (Voice of Song) in 1866. The final and largest collection in three volumes, entitled *Kol Shirē Mahalalel* (All Poems of Mahalalel)—the name Mahalalel being the Hebrew translation of Gottlober—was issued in 1891. He was, as said, a prolific poet, and he wrote lyrics, nature songs, epigrams, didactic and national poems, and a long poem in the manner of Jewish Mediaeval singers on the history of poetry among the Jews. However, he is distinguished more by quantity than by quality, for though he considered himself the equal of the elder Lebensohn, he falls far behind him both in depth of thought as well as in strength of expression. His lyrical poems are tinged with religious feeling and deal with the immortality of the soul, the evidence of the existence of God as manifested in the harmony of nature, and similar topics. His few nature poems remind us of the elder Lebensohn. Like him, he sings of the sun and revels in its light and its healthful and life-giving rays. He attempts to paint the beauties of spring, but his colors are drab and mechanical. Like all the Haskalah poets, he glorifies knowledge, and in a series of poems *Mishpat Ami* (The Trial of my People), *Shema Yisrael*, and *Keṣ la-Hosheḳ* (The End of Darkness), he calls upon his people, in the manner of Gordon, to change their ways and turn to the light of knowledge. He even attempts to satirize the manners and the one-sided life of the ghetto, but his barbs are dull.

He succeeded far more in his national poems, where he bewails the sufferings of his people, expresses the hope in their survival, and later (at the beginning of the national period), calls his brethren back to Zion. His sorrow at the eternal wandering of his people is feelingly expressed by him in several short poems where the nation is compared to a bird or to a wave-tossed boat. The bird motive is quite popular in modern Hebrew poetry. We have seen above that Letteris (Sec. 33) used it in his *Yonah Homiah* and even the poet Laureate of our generation, Bialik, began his poetic career with a song "To the Bird" (*El ha-Zipor*). In his *ha-Zipor be-Klub* (The Bird in the Cage), Gottlober expresses in three sonnets the plight of the bird which once roamed free in the Lebanon and the Carmel and is now im-

prisoned in a cage, its dreams of the land of its birth, and its assertion that, in spite of all suffering, it will remain true to Zion. In a similar poem, *Kol Yeshorer be-Halon* (A Voice Heard Through the Window), the motive is the mournful song of the caged bird which longs to be free and to return to her own nest. In the *Aniyah So'ara* (The Wave-Tossed Ship) written after the pogroms in Russia in 1880, he expresses in a stirring way both the plight of Israel and his confidence in his eternal existence. The waves rage, the frail bark is tossed hither and thither; many a stronger ship would have sunk long ago, but the bark defies the storm and sails on. These poems are among his best and though there is little originality in the motives, they are written in vigorous style and swinging meter.

A leading motive in the poetry of Gottlober is his defense of Israel against the calumnies of his enemies and his vindication. To this theme he devoted many long poems, and one entitled *Neẓaḥ Yisrael* (The Strength of Israel) contains an appeal of the Jewish people to the nations of the earth. It is both an appeal and an arraignment. Israel tells of his past glory, praises his system of law, and apologizes for his short-comings, but lays the guilt for this at the door of the nations, and finally expresses the hope that the sun of justice will shine also for him.

A very skilful poetic composition is Gottlober's poem, *Toldot ha-Shir we-ha-Melizah* (The History of Poetry and Exalted Writing) where he unrolls before us the entire development of poetry in Israel from the time of the Bible to the end of the seventeenth century. The poem is logically divided into three parts. The first part, which serves as a prologue, is an ode to poetry telling of its might and glory, its nature and its influence on life. The second part speaks of the unfolding of the spirit of poetry in the Bible and Talmud. In very beautiful passages, the poet describes the poetic qualities of various parts of the Scriptures, the vigor and nobility of the style of each prophet, and finally the beauties of the Agada. The third part marshals forth all the poets and great writers of the ages from the Gaonim to the Modern Period. In stately lines, Gottlober describes the great singers of Israel, the character of their poetry, their noble souls and their life. It is a veritable epitome of the history of Jewish literature, for the author includes almost all writers of note: poets, *Paitanim*, grammarians, all who tilled in the vineyard of the Hebrew language. While it cannot be said that Gottlober displays great poetic spirit in this work, yet it is a fine didactic poem and the only

one of its kind in modern Hebrew literature. Our poet also busied himself with translations, as he rendered into Hebrew many of Schiller's and Herder's poems and quite a considerable number of "The Songs of Israel" (Niginot Yisrael) written by the German-Jewish poet, August Ludwig Frankl. His best translated work, however, is his rendering into Hebrew of Lessing's drama, *Nathan der Weise*, entitled *Nathan ha-Hakam*. This book was translated several times, but Gottlob's translation surpasses the others both in beauty of style and poetic quality.

ii. A poet of far greater significance as well as of wider popularity was Judah ha-Levi Levin (Yehalel) (1845-1925). Judah Levin was born in the city of Minsk, in White Russia. He received a thorough Jewish education and in addition was also instructed in the rudiments of secular knowledge. His native city was to a certain degree a center of enlightenment, and the young Judah soon made the acquaintance of the Maskilim and became one himself. At the age of twenty, he began his literary career by publishing an essay in the Hebrew weekly *ha-Meliz*, which was followed by poems in various periodicals. In the house of David Luria, one of the leading merchants of Minsk who was also a man of letters, Levin became acquainted with the famous Jewish captain of industry, Israel Brodsky of Kiev, who engaged the young writer as his children's tutor. Later, he turned to business and became the manager of one of Brodsky's factories, a position which he held until the Russian Revolution.

Levin began his poetic career as a disciple of the elder Lebensohn, and like him, wrote poems of a philosophic nature. But in the late sixties along with many intellectual Jews, he came under the influence of the Russian essayist, Pisarew, who propagated the theories of positivism, and our young poet, saturated with these ideas, became a mouthpiece of the new phase of the later Haskalah—the utilitarian. Still later in the seventies, he was influenced by the incipient socialist movement in Russia and henceforth his muse was devoted to the denunciation of the injustice in the distribution of wealth. Levin thus became the poet of the poor and down-trodden, a new note in the poetry of Haskalah. He, however, was not swept away by the current of cosmopolitan socialism as some of the younger Hebrew writers of the time, but always remained loyal to his people. And when in the early eighties of the last century, the pogroms and persecutions broke out in Russia, and as a result, the Nationalist

movement began to take root, Levin devoted his pen to the miseries of his people and to the dream of return to Zion.

We thus have two periods in our poet's productivity, the positivistic-socialistic and the national. In the first period, he expresses his passion for truth and justice with great feeling and pathos. He begins the series with the poem *ma-Y'omru ha-Briot* (What Will People Say), where he denounces the manifestations, in all phases of life, of the subjection of people to conventional lies. In poems, such as *Ebed Abodim* (Slave of Slaves) and *Keẓef En Onim* (Impotent Rage), the poet pours out his wrath against the injustice of the capitalistic system. In the second poem especially, he storms the heavens and calls upon God to smite those who enrich themselves by the toil of others. Levin's longest and best poem of this kind is his *Kishron ha-Ma'ase* (The Success of Production). The purpose of the poet was, as he explains in the introduction, to discover who is the master of society, who makes the ability, toil, and talents of others serve his personal interests? We see, he says, a bitter struggle going on in social life, one which results in diverse types of suffering; but who is the one who profits by these sufferings? The poem is divided into four chapters. In the first, a poor intellectual relates the story of his life and paints the evils that have befallen him due to the social system. The second contains the story of an artisan, who, though not hungry for bread, suffers because of his ignorance and low station in society. The third is the tale of a physician who starts out in life with the purpose of realizing the ideals of his student days, but is forced by necessity to become greedy and materialistic like his colleagues. The fourth draws the picture of the capitalist who is the source of these evils in society. The picture is drawn in very black colors and expresses a vigorous protest against the then growing power of capitalism though in a much exaggerated form.

Of the poems of the second period, most are permeated with a spirit of protest against the suffering of his people. In a number of them, Levin portrays the horrors of the pogroms to which he was an eye witness. But though he possessed much love for his people, his poems do not portray the depth of misery of a martyred nation in the strong manner it deserves except the *Ani Tefillah* (I Pray) which is distinguished by its bitter irony. In it the poet expresses the hope that no injury befall a Gentile drunkard so that the Jews

be not accused of killing him for religious purposes; that the peasants in the villages spend their Sundays in the Church and not in the taverns so that pogroms shall not result; that editors of papers be prosperous so that they may not attack the Jews; and that actresses fall in love with high officials and not with rich Jews. In short, he prays that God grant all luck and prosperity to the neighbors so that the Jews may live in peace. Levin continued to write occasional poems also during a great part of the national period, but at that time, the sun of greater and more powerful bards had already risen and he was gradually overshadowed by them until his muse was silenced altogether.

iii. Solomon Mandelkern (1840-1902), the last member of the triad, was a prolific and gifted poet, but due to the fact that much of his productivity took place during the post-Haskalah or national period, when the younger and greater poets made their appearance, he was not fully appreciated. Like many poets of the Haskalah, he began with a Biblical poem, and chose as his theme an episode in the life of King David, the favorite of the poets, his love for Bat-Sheba. His poem, though entitled *Bat-Sheba*, does not concentrate upon the portrayal of the character of the woman, and only a few stanzas are devoted to her struggle against the king's illicit love. David is the hero; his passion, his punishment for his act by the revolt of his son Absalom, and his contrition are masterfully depicted. The rhyme is light, the meter short, and the style vigorous. Mandelkern distinguished himself especially as an epigrammatist. He wrote a considerable number of epigrams which possess keen wit and stinging satire. The targets of his shafts of satire are women, misers, hypocrites, physicians, and poets. The following deserve to be quoted:

God, I confess that you have shown me grace;
A wife and wine are both the gifts to please.
The wine is new, the wife is old—alas,
Could you not then have changed these qualities?

On friends:

Some friends are like the shadow,
They follow us while the sun shineth.²⁴

²⁴ *Shirê Sfat Eber* p. 45.

He also succeeded as a translator, and his translation of Heine's poem, "Judah ben Halevi," is a masterly production, for not only did he render the ideas and thoughts of the original in an elegant Hebrew style but also added fine touches of his own. With equal skill, he translated many other poems by Frug, Lessing, Goethe, Pushkin, and Lermontoff.

Mandelkern tried his hand also at ballads and lyrics with some success. One of his ballads entitled *Leḳo Dodi*, describing the death of a young child caused by fright upon remaining alone in the synagogue after prayers, reminds us strongly of Goethe's *Der Erlkönig*.* His lyrics, however, express little of the emotions of the individual, but are mainly national in character. One of these called *The Clock* is quite stirring. It tells of a wonderful clock in the possession of the poet which no master but God himself could have produced. Its mechanism is complex; at times, its ticking is fast, at other times, it slows down. It registers all the vicissitudes of his life and the life of his people. At the end of his days, the poet will come to God, and say, "Master, the plight of my people broke Thy skilful mechanism, and the clock stopped." That clock is the poet's heart.

41. MINOR POETS

Many were the poets who arose during the second period of the Haskalah. Almost every Hebrew writer made his literary debut by penning several poems, or at times, even producing a whole collection of them, but only few of these really deserve the name poet even in a broad sense. One of these few was Jacob Eichenbaum (1796-1862) whose collection of poems *Kol Zimrah* (Voice of Song), published in 1836, displays skill on the part of the author in composing nature poems, and dexterity in the manipulation of the Hebrew language. He also wrote, in imitation of Abraham Ibn Ezra, a long epic on the game of chess entitled *ha-Krob* (The War), where he describes vividly the intricate ways and rules of this game. The poem has the ring of a war song and in its time made a great impression upon the readers.

Mordecai Werbel is another poet (1805-1880) whose long narrative poem, *Edim Neamanim*, (True Witnesses) possesses great merit.

* It was the common belief of children in former times that the dead rise from their graves at night and go to the synagogue to hold services.

The theme is a Talmudic legend which runs as follows: A beautiful maiden, journeying through the desert, descended in search of water, into a deep well to quench her thirst but could not climb out. She was saved from drowning by a young man on condition that she marry him. They plighted their troth, and calling upon the well and a passing weasel as witnesses, they parted. The maiden was true to her lover and repeatedly repelled suitors by feigning insanity. The man, though, forgot his promise and married another woman who bore him a son. When the child was three months old, it was choked by a weasel. Another son was born to them and he fell into a well. The wife became suspicious at these strange happenings and urged her husband to reveal his past to her. Upon hearing the tale, she agreed to a divorce, and the man went in search of his bride whom he finally married. This romantic motive was often employed in Hebrew poetry and later incorporated in the drama *Shulamit* by the Yiddish dramatist, Abraham Goldfaden. Werbel did not exploit all the possibilities of his material, yet he produced a vigorous poem, though it emphasizes the moral side of the story more than the intensity of the passion of love.

Of the others, we may mention Abraham Goldfaden (1840-1908) whose collection of poems *Zizim u-Perahim* (Blossoms and Flowers) exhibits poetic spirit, and Nathan Note Samuely (1846-1921), who in his youth published a book of poems in two parts entitled *Knaf Renanim* (The Singing Bird), the second of which contains a number of Biblical poems. All these poets display in their rhythm, language, and spirit the influence of Micah Joseph Lebensohn.

There were two other poets whose works, though primarily translations, are real contributions to modern Hebrew poetry. These were Israel Rall (1830-1893) and J. N. Salkinson (1842-1883). The first showed special predilection for the classical masters, and his *Shirē Romi* (The Songs of Rome) contains selections from the *Metamorphoses* of Ovid, the *De Rerum Natura* of Lucretius, the Odes and Satires of Horace, the Satires of Juvenal, and *Georgics* of Virgil. Rall succeeded in the translation of all these types of poetry, but especially of the idyllic pictures of agricultural life by Virgil and of the keen satires of Horace. The language is Biblical and the style and rhythm light and elastic. His rendering of the witty sentences of Horace is a masterful production, and little of the original thought is lost by the translation.

The second, the son of the Hebrew poet, Solomon Zalkind of

Wilna, who later became a Christian missionary in London, devoted himself to the two great English poets, Shakespeare and Milton. He translated Shakespeare's *Othello* and *Romeo and Juliet*, and Milton's *Paradise Lost*. Salkinson had a tendency to change the names of the heroes and titles of the poems to similar Biblical names. *Othello the Moor* became *Itiel ha-Kushi* and *Romeo and Juliet*, *Rom we-Ya'el*. He had greater difficulty with the title *Paradise Lost*, and rendered it by a Biblical sentence *wa-Ye-Garesh Et ha-Adam* (Genesis III, 24) which is rather an awkward title. The translations themselves, however, are veritable masterpieces of rendition from one language into another. In spite of the fact that the number of words in Hebrew is small as compared with the rich stock of English, Salkinson succeeded in conveying the nuances of the Shakespearean expressions as well as the poetic euphuisms by admirable Hebrew equivalents. He was even able to translate the delicate tracings of the nature pictures without losing much of their original beauty. Salkinson was especially successful in his translation of *Paradise Lost*. This production which is the apotheosis of the Protestant theology had a distinct attraction for him. Whether from true inclination or because of a desire to show his zeal for his new faith, he absorbed himself in it, and his version of the Miltonian poem lacks but little of the original. It must, of course, be taken into consideration that the Biblical spirit pervading this poem greatly facilitated the clothing of the thought into Hebrew garb.

Finally we must mention Dr. Isaac Kaminer (1836-1901) whose poems occupy a peculiar place in the Haskalah poetry. In fact, the name poet can be extended to him only by courtesy, for in reality he is a Mediaeval *Paitan* who strayed in a modern world. Like the *Paitanim* of old, he uses the monorhyme in all his poems, and employs their style and form. He is even paitanic and monotonous in the content of his poems, for he has only one theme, the Jewish people. Their woes, suffering, hopes, internal divisions, the dire consequences of a life of exile, these are the subjects which occupy his attention. All other things are excluded. The beauties of nature do not captivate him, nor does love entice him. His poetic muse, if muse it can be called, knows only one love, that of Israel. It is the one theme in various manifestations about which he sang for over thirty years. Love of Israel was his *idée fixe* and its warmth and ardor is expressed in every line he wrote, whether in his *Tefillot* (Prayers) or *Kinot* (Elegies) or parodies to ancient liturgies,

for even the titles of his poems were borrowed from the bards of the synagogue. He says himself in one of his parodies that to him Judaism is embodied in one dogma, "Thou shalt love thy people with all thy heart all thy soul and all thy might." The soul of Kaminer was the soul of a *Paitan* which by the process of metempsychosis, entered the body of a modern man.

His poems or rather *Piyyutim* found great favor with the readers of his time who enjoyed the skilful imitation of the style of the *Paitan* and were swayed by the glowing love for the Jewish people radiating from every verse. The warmth of emotion and the ardor of devotion compensated them for the lack of poetic depth and beauty of form.

CHAPTER VI

THE NOVEL OF THE HASKALAH

42. GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

Like in all literatures, so in modern Hebrew literature, the novel represents a late stage in its development. Its earlier expression was, as we have seen, poetry and essays, mostly of a polemic and didactic nature. The reasons for the late appearance of this literary species are not far to seek, for besides the general cause, applying to all literatures, that time is required for the nurture of men endowed with special ability to deal with this more complicated literary production, there were particular factors which retarded the writing of the novel. These were the serious tone of the Haskalah literature and the lack of literary tradition. This literature was born in strife and was permeated by a deep spirit of earnestness. Such a spirit is not conducive to fiction writing, for even the most serious novel requires, besides imagination and observation, also a certain degree of lightness of attitude toward life, a calmness and serenity of mind which enables the writer to develop a plot. The second factor, the lack of literary tradition, also formed an impediment in the development of the novel. Jewish literature of the Mediaeval Ages hardly furnished any specimens of fiction except the tale and the satire. The tale could not be introduced in a modern world, and as for satire, it did in fact appear earlier than the novel. Time had to elapse, therefore, until Hebrew writers could undertake, partly under the influences of European literature and partly through the development of their own ability, the composition of a novel.

However, once the beginning was made, the number of novels and stories produced during the late Haskalah period was quite considerable. Just as earlier in the age, every Hebrew writer considered it his duty to pen some poetry, so later many would-be authors tried their hand at story and novel writing, but few of them really deserve the name of novelists of the Haskalah. This title can be bestowed only upon about three or four of the writers.

It is almost futile to speak of different schools in the fiction of that period, as we find the same writers to be both romantic and realistic, and both terms are to be applied with some reserve. The most outstanding characteristics of the fiction of the period are the abstractedness of its types and the didactic tendency of the authors. There is little psychological insight in evidence, and scarcely an attempt to delineate the characters of the heroes in detail. These lack individuality, and, on the whole, are types who act in conformity to certain patterns conceived by the author rather than persons with initiative of their own. There is not much variety and versatility in their spiritual makeup, as they are either good or bad, either angels or devils with little conflict in their souls. As for the didactic tendency, it is strongly marked, even dominating the fiction of the period. The strife between the champions of new values and those who guarded the old type of Jewish life, was transferred from the field of Jewish poetry and the essay to that of the novel. The advocates of change in Jewish life began to employ a new weapon, that of depicting the beauty of the life they were desirous to introduce and pointing out the dark side of the life they wanted to eradicate by means of the characters they drew. It was this tendency on their part which stamped the entire fiction of the period with a peculiar character. It obliterated to a certain extent the dividing line between romanticism and realism, for even the romantic novels were permeated by the same spirit. It contributed to the abstractedness of the characters and minimized their activities, for in place of action we frequently have long oratorical speeches expostulating the theories of the Haskalah.

Yet, with all these defects from the point of view of literary art, the authors accomplished their aim. Their weapon became a very effective one. The fiction of the period was more instrumental in spreading the views of enlightenment than the polemic essays and even the poems. This tendency attaches a special literary value to these novels, for if the purpose of literature is to be close to life, to elevate and ennoble it, these literary productions accomplished that purpose. They were carriers of great ideas, and, though at times they were distorted through the naïveté and short-sightedness of the authors, their influence was, on the whole, wholesome. Much of the theories of the national movement and the consequent results of the intensive cultivation of the Hebrew language, which took place during the succeeding period, may be credited to the influence ex-

erted by the novel of the Haskalah. We shall now attempt to delineate in greater detail the various novels of the period and trace the development of modern Hebrew fiction.

43. ABRAHAM MAPU

The first to introduce the novel in modern Hebrew literature and to open to its readers a new world full of vision, totally different from the world in which they lived and moved daily, was Abraham Mapu (1808-1868). Mapu was born in Slobodka, a suburb of Kovno, an important city in Lithuania. His father, Yekutiel, a Hebrew teacher, gave him the prevailing Jewish education, and being endowed with great intellectual ability, he mastered much of the Talmudic learning of the day early in life and was known as a prodigy (Ilui). At the age of fifteen, he was initiated into the mysteries of the Kabbala by his father, who was engaged in its study. The young Abraham, who possessed a poetic soul, was greatly attracted by the mystic doctrines couched in semi-poetic language, especially by the phase known as practical Kabbala, (Vol. II, Sec. 105). He was inflamed with a desire to master those secrets by means of which one can perform wonders, and was particularly anxious to learn how to become invisible. He made a number of experiments along these lines, pronouncing all the incantations and carrying out all other directions, but was greatly disappointed when invisibility was denied him. At the age of eighteen he was married to the daughter of a rich man of Kovno, who, as was customary, supported him for a number of years while he devoted himself to study. It was during his visits at the home of the Rabbi of Slobodka, that he found in his library a Bible with a Latin translation, and he began to study that language by means of the accompanying Hebrew text. But while studying Latin, he also studied the Bible in the original, and before long young Mapu became a master of Hebrew. Several years later, upon the impoverishment of his father-in-law, he was forced to find a livelihood for his family, and Abraham became a teacher at the house of a village innkeeper. He made the acquaintance of a Catholic priest, who helped him to master more thoroughly classical Latin as well as German and French, and thus he was fully launched on the path of Haskalah.

In 1830 Mapu began to plan for his first novel, *Ahabat Zion* (The Love of Zion), a historical novel of the Biblical period, and worked on it for twenty-three years, ultimately publishing it in 1853. During

these years he sojourned in several cities, among them Wilna where he was engaged as private tutor, but finally was appointed as teacher in one of the Jewish government schools in his native city of Kovno, where he resided to the end of his days.

The appearance of the *Ahabat-Zion* made a great impression on its readers, and the author was encouraged in his work. He immediately began work on another novel, this time a realistic one, depicting contemporary life, entitled *Ayit Zabua* (literally a speckled bird, but there is a play upon the word *Zabua* which in the Talmud also signifies hypocrite, as the hero typifies the hypocrisy current at the time among the opponents of enlightenment). The first part of the book was published in 1857, the second in 1863, and the third in 1864, the last two parts posthumously. While the *Ayit Zabua* was being published, Mapu engaged in the writing of another historical novel, *Hose Hesyonot* (The Seer of Visions), which dealt with the period of the false Messiah, Sabbatai Zebi, with a view of relating it to the rise of Hassidism. The partisans of the Hassidim, hearing of its purposed contents, petitioned the censor to prohibit its publication, and ultimately the manuscript was lost or destroyed in the censor's office. This together with the fact that the *Ayit Zabua* was not as favorably received by the public as his first novel, caused Mapu to turn once more to the Biblical period, and as a result, he produced his last novel, *Ashmat Shomron* (The Transgression of Samaria) in two parts, which forms a companion volume to the *Ahabat Zion*. Besides novels, Mapu also wrote several text books for the teaching of Hebrew.

In 1866 he was affected with kidney trouble and sought cure in the medical centers of Western Europe and finally died at Königsberg after an unsuccessful operation in the month of September, 1867.

The *Ahabat Zion*, as indicated, is an historical novel depicting the events at the time of the Kings Aḥaz and Hezekiah. Its plot, in the construction of which Mapu was influenced by the dramas of Moses Ḥayyim Luzzatto (Sec. 17), the *Migdal Oz* and *la-Yeshorim Tehillah*, is on the whole, very simple and runs as follows:

There lived in Jerusalem, in the time of King Aḥaz, two friends, Yoram and Yediyah, both wealthy and of high descent. The first was an officer in the army and the second financial secretary to the king. Yoram had two wives, Hagit and Na'ama. The former, though the mother of several children, was not as loved by her husband as Na'ama was, who was barren for a long time. Ulti-

mately the latter became pregnant, but before she gave birth, Yoram went to war with the Philistines and was taken captive by them. Before his departure, he entrusted his family to the care of Yedidyah, and in addition made a covenant with him that in case Na'ama gives birth to a son, and Tirza, wife of Yedidyah gives birth to a daughter, the children should marry each other. Somewhat earlier, Hagit the other wife of Yoram, gave birth to a son whom she named Azrikam. He was nursed by her servant Helah who also gave birth about the same time to a son named Nabal. When Yoram was captured, Hagit became the mistress of the establishment and treated the servants with great severity. Akan, the husband of Helah, came to Matan, one of the judges of Jerusalem to complain of Hagit's maltreatment of himself and wife. The judge who had loved Hagit before her marriage to Yoram but was rejected by her, seeing an opportunity to revenge himself both upon Yoram and Hagit, persuaded Akan to set fire to her house, burn Hagit and her children, substitute his own son Nabal for Azrikam and throw the blame on Na'ama. The deed was done and a rumor spread that Na'ama was guilty of the crime. She managed, however, to flee and find refuge with a shepherd, Abishai, who took charge of the herds of Yoram near Bethlehem. There Na'ama gave birth to twins, a son named Amnon and a daughter Peninah. Her guilt was confirmed in court in her absence through the testimony of false witnesses furnished by Matan.

Yedidyah, shocked by the catastrophe that befell the house of Yoram, kept faith with his friend, and managed his estates, and raised the supposed son of Yoram in his home together with his own son Tēman and his daughter Tamar whom he considered the betrothed of his friend's son. During this time, Samaria fell and among the captives was also Hannanel, the father-in-law of Yedidyah. A priest of Baal, Zimri, managed to escape from captivity and through him Hannanel sent a letter to his daughter and son-in-law in which he related a dream he had, wherein a young man, whom he described in great detail, appeared to him saying that he is the lover of his granddaughter Tamar and that he will redeem him from captivity. Together with the letter, Hannanel gave Zimri his seal. The priest delivered the letter but kept the seal for future occasions. Tirzah was greatly impressed by the letter and stored it away, and Yedidyah who was credulous, appointed the dissimulating Zimri, as manager of his household.

Years passed and Tamar grew and became a beautiful maiden endowed with many virtues. Azrikam, on the other hand, was ugly and perverse in character. The maiden despised him with all her heart, which sentiment was shared by her brother. As a result, Yedidyah was forced to send Azrikam out of his home and settle him on his father's estate. One day, while Tamar was visiting in Bethlehem, she took a walk in the fields where she was attacked by a lion. A young shepherd rescued her, and she was captivated by his beauty, bravery, and elegant manners. This shepherd was none other than Amnon who was raised in total ignorance of his high descent. He, secretly, returned the love of Tamar but dared not make it known to her on account of his position. Still at the insistent request of Tamar, he promised to call at her father's house on his visit to Jerusalem to celebrate the Feast of Tabernacles.

A similar adventure happened to Tēman, the brother of Tamar. While visiting the estates of Yoram in Mount Carmel, he met a beautiful maiden who pretended to be the daughter of a Philistine woman. She was Peninah, the sister of Amnon. Tēman fell in love with her, and when he became insistent in his courting, the maiden asked him to wait three days for an answer. When on the fourth day he came for his answer, he was informed that mother and daughter had departed for unknown places.

When the Feast of Tabernacles arrived, Amnon came to Jerusalem. He visited Tamar's house and was received with joy by her parents who asked him to remain with them. He accepted their offer and at first became a disciple of the prophets, but later joined the royal cavalry. His new occupation only enhanced his natural qualities and Tamar became more and more infatuated with him. Azrikam, though, did not relish the friendship between the two and sought advice from the shrewd Zimri. The crafty ex-priest forged a letter from Hannanel wherein he informed his daughter Tirzah that he is dying and is sending her his blessing from his death-bed. He sealed the letter with Hannanel's seal which he had retained. Yedidyah, the credulous, believed the letter genuine and told his wife and daughter not to place trust in the dream wherein Hannanel had described the young man who was to redeem him, which description corresponded with that of Amnon. Tirzah and Tamar, though, had their suspicions and continued to

hope for the realization of the dream. When this ruse proved of no avail, Zimri informed Yedidyah of the love of his daughter for Amnon and the former dismissed the young man from his house.

Meanwhile, Matan who had instigated Akan to burn the house of Hagit, stricken by remorse on his death bed, sent for Yedidyah and was about to confess his guilt when he was prevented by a sudden turn for the worse and merely had time to turn over the key to his treasury before he died. There, Yedidyah found, to his great astonishment, the treasures of Yoram which he turned over to the court. Akan was likewise stricken by remorse, and to atone for his sins, he revealed to Amnon that Hannanel was still alive and advised him to free him and thus realize the dream. His own son Azrikam he planned to marry off to Peninah. Amnon then went to Assyria and brought Hannanel back. All were jubilant and Yedidyah had to consent to the marriage of his daughter to Amnon. But the shrewd Zimri planned a master stroke to prevent the union of the lovers. For months he had spied upon Amnon and discovered that he visited his mother and sister in their hiding-place in Jerusalem. He concluded that Amnon loved the girl and informed Tamar of the fact, and, to convince her of Amnon's perfidy, he put poison into a bottle of wine which Amnon sent to Tamar together with a letter asking for forgiveness. His guilt was thus proved and Amnon was ordered by Tamar to leave Jerusalem, whereupon he joined the expedition against the Philistines.

Help for the hero came from an unexpected source, for while his mother and sister were brought to court and accused by Zimri as sorceresses, Akan stricken with remorse, revealed to Azrikam his own sin. Azrikam, however, in order to silence his father, set his house on fire and stabbed his mother. He was seized and brought to court together with the dying Akan. There everything was disclosed and Na'ama and Peninah were exonerated and returned to the estates of Yoram.

At this time, Sennacherib approached the gates of Jerusalem and confusion reigned in the city. In the house of Yedidyah, the fear of the enemy was added to the anxiety for the safety of Amnon who, as was rumored, was taken captive by the Philistines and sold as a slave on the Island of Crete. There he met his father Yoram. The city was miraculously saved from the hand of the conqueror, and the deliverance was heralded far and wide. It

reached also the captors of Amnon and Yoram and they were freed and returned safely to Jerusalem. The joy of both families was then complete.

Judging the first and probably the best novel of Mapu by the canons of modern literary criticism, we must conclude that its great value lies not in its content, but in its form. The most important elements of the plot were, as indicated, borrowed from Moses Ḥayyim Luzzatto's dramas, *la-Yeshorim Tehillah* and *Migdal Oz*. The exchange of Nabal for Azrikam which is the backbone of the story is taken from the first where the whole story is built around the fact that *Rahab* is exchanged for *Yosher* in time of siege, while the dream of Ḥannanel which plays such an important part in the tale is modelled after the dream of King Rom in the second (Sec. 17). Likewise, can we trace other features in this plot to these dramas. Nor are the development and construction of the story very original, but an imitation of the methods employed by contemporary French writers of romantic novels. There is little sequence in the progress of events, changes are sudden and arise in a miraculous manner. The delineation of the characters is also deficient. There is no attempt at a psychological analysis and the heroes possess little individuality, but are more or less types.

Yet with all these deficiencies, the *Ahabat Zion* is a real work of art, even if the art consists entirely in its form. Its greatest value lies in the vividness of description of the life of the period. In this Mapu displayed great power. He actually resuscitated the life of a long-forgotten time. There is so much naturalness in the recital of the story that the reader is carried away from contemporary life to a distant time and place and becomes an onlooker of the events transpiring around him. It is marvelous how a man like Mapu who spent his life in the ghetto of Kovno with its crooked and muddy streets could visualize a life of beauty and pastoral tranquillity as is described in some of the chapters of the novel. He completely immersed himself in the atmosphere which he created by his own imagination. In *Ahabat Zion*, the long pent-up yearning of the Jew of the ghetto for the beauty of nature, which was frequently though sporadically expressed by various writers and poets throughout the Haskalah period, found its culmination. Hence, the exceptional skill displayed by our author in the portrayal of pastoral and vintage scenes. Mapu does not only depict rural scenes masterfully but also the life of the city. He penetrates with deep insight

into the life of the past and revives before us the events and actions which had transpired in Jerusalem in the time of Hezekiah. One by one these pass before our eyes, the joyous scenes of the celebration of the festivals of Passover and Succoth by the pilgrims who crowded the Holy City, the siege which divided the populace into factions, and finally the scene of redemption when the army of the mighty conqueror was smitten by the hand of God. In all these kaleidoscopic descriptions, there is not a trace of artificiality, all fit so well into their natural setting and are expressed in such pure Biblical language that we imagine that these pages are in reality leaves taken out from some lost Scriptural book.

Another valuable characteristic of the book is the brevity of expression. Our author succeeded in drawing vivid pictures in a few words. With simple but select colors and several chosen strokes, the artist delineates a scene which impresses itself upon the mind of the reader. Finally, there is the quality of the language. True, Mapu did not invent a new style, for his is primarily an imitation of that of the Bible, but there is originality in his use of it. It is completely adapted to the narrative and the events of the story and is distinguished by its simplicity and economy. Even the euphuisms with which the book abounds do not seem out of place and sound quite natural in the mouths of ordinary people who were among the auditors of Isaiah. Mapu proved that the language of the Bible can be used to great advantage not only for the expression of lofty thoughts but also for the narrating of a well-connected story.

All these qualities are of a permanent and lasting nature, which make the book valuable even today. We must not forget though that its value was much greater for its generation. For the readers of the day, it was a real revelation. It took them out of the miserable life of the ghetto with its squalor and sordidness and brought them into a new world of broad fields and blossoming vines, a world where love was not forbidden, where young people moved freely and enjoyed life moderately, without external restraint. It aroused in them a desire for a life of nature and evoked in their hearts a sense of beauty. In addition, it also expressed the philosophy of life of the Haskalah for though it was an historical novel, it reflected the ideas of the age. The heroes are all enlightened people who strive for knowledge, and on the other hand, the "villain," Zimri, is represented as a hypocrite who parades as a

pious man and uses his apparent piety for his own purpose, a characteristic frequently attributed by the Maskilim to their opponents. Mapu's beautiful descriptions of rural life and the happiness enjoyed by those who labor with their hands, spread the ideals of the movement of enlightenment which propagated the cultivation of the soil and the engaging in manual labor as the proper ways of life. Mapu also performed a national service, for indirectly his *Ahabat Zion* was a forerunner of the national sentiment which found expression a generation later. His vivid description brought his readers the scent of the lilies of Sharon and the fragrance of Lebanon. There passed before their eyes the waving green of the Carmel, the pastures of Bethlehem, and the vineyards of Judea, all of which aroused in their hearts the dormant love for Zion.

His second great historical novel, *Ashmat Shomron* (The Guilt of Samaria) shares both the faults and the good qualities of the first. There is not much advancement in the construction of the plot nor in the psychological analysis of the characters of the story. In fact, as far as the plot is concerned, it resembles greatly that of the *Ahabat Zion*, as both possess common elements. One of the principal characters in the second novel, Elifelet, grows up, like Amnon, under an assumed name, and his noble descent is only revealed at the end of the story. Moreover, several characters of the former novel are re-introduced in the later production. These devices prove that Mapu was more of the poet and the seer than the story writer and did not possess much ability for inventing new plots and many new episodes. Yet the *Ashmat Shomron* displays some improvement in plot construction and in the concatenation of events. The story is more complicated, the number of characters larger, and the scenes of life portrayed more varied and considerably more colorful. In the *Ahabat Zion*, the idyllic predominates, while in the second work we feel the pulse of the rushing life of the capital of Israel, Samaria; we hear the din of battle, and are introduced to the variegated machinations of the priests of Beth El who exploit both religion and politics for their own purposes.

In the *Ashmat Shomron*, Mapu drew his portraits on a large canvas which embraced both Judah and Israel. The time is that of the last days of the kingdom of Israel, when the kings were merely shadows and puppets in the hands of the generals on the one hand, and the crafty priests on the other hand. The moral situation in Judah was not much better, for it was the reign of Aḥaz who strove

to imitate the northern kingdom in its cult and in its glittering social life. It is this tumultuous rushing life, filled with strife, cunning, and riotous orgies in the name of religion, which the author undertook to delineate and succeeded in a large measure. It is true that the multiplicity of events and the numerous episodes which he tried to combine in the story proved too difficult for him to master. Consequently, there are many lacunae in the sequence, while on the other hand, many acts on the part of the characters are unnecessary and only unduly accentuate the frightful picture the author wished to draw of them. But here, as in the first work, the real value of the production lies in the form.

The power of description and the presentation of the life of the past is revealed in Mapu's second novel to a greater extent than in the first. With the help of a few prophetic books of the Bible, the author pieced together the isolated stray incidents recorded there and constructed them into a narrative breathing with vividness. His thirteenth chapter in Part I is a masterful portrayal of a religious orgy on the mountains around Beth El. We see before us groups of young men and young women heated by wine and inflamed both by lust and ecstasy of a false religion, madly dancing to the strains of the pipe and the harp. We hear the flowing oratory of the false prophets who encourage the people in the deceptive trust of their strength and hide from them the approaching doom. We also see the crafty priests of Baal gliding furtively through the crowds rejoicing at the sight. There is, of course, no lack of the idyllic and the pastoral in the book, for the exaltation of that life was one of the principal aims of our author. In fact, the first chapter consists entirely of an excellent description of the Lebanon mountains, of their cliffs, valleys, and precipices, and the reader feels the moisture of the dew of Hermon and the rustling of the tall cedars. The tendency to exalt the ideal and the good life is felt in the entire progress of both stories. In both works, there is an underlying conflict between men who champion the cause of goodness, knowledge, and justice, and men to whom falsehood, hypocrisy, and evil are second nature; and the author, of course, makes the good triumph. In this we hear an echo of the war of the enlightened with their opponents. Due to this tendency, Mapu made his characters paragons of virtue, almost perfect in their conduct. It is especially manifest in the characters of the women in the novels. With few exceptions he endowed them with good qualities, such as beauty,

sweetness, and nobility of soul, veritable ideal daughters of Israel.

The influence of the two historical novels of Mapu was, at the time of their appearance, exceedingly great, and they formed the most frequented path to Haskalah for numerous students of the Yeshibah and the Heder. Even the opponents of the enlightenment felt instinctively that these books were its powerful weapons and they prohibited their reading with great zeal and vigor.

In his third novel, *Ayit Zabua*, Mapu turned from the distant past to depict the life of his own generation. It was a bold attempt, for the story is a lengthy one consisting of five parts and the plot is complicated; it was on the whole unsuccessful. All the defects and shortcomings of the writer in plot construction and his inability to present the concatenation of events in systematic sequence are displayed in the novel in a most atrocious manner. It is a typical Haskalah story, for its theme pictures the struggle between the champions of the old order of life in Jewry and those of the enlightened, and its purpose was to depict the former in the darkest colors, and the latter in the brightest. It thus appears that the opponents of the Haskalah were mostly hypocrites who committed many crimes in secret, but appeared outwardly pious, using their piety as a cloak to cover their evil deeds. The animosity which they displayed towards the enlightened served them only as a means of increasing their influence upon the people who, as a whole, were superstitious and followers of the old order. The enlightened, on the other hand, were people who were models of truth and honesty and who strove to improve Jewish life. We have, therefore, in the story two sets of characters, villains and noble men. The first oppress and persecute the second, but only for a stated time. The author, anxious to have truth and justice triumph, turns the tables upon the villains and reveals them in their true character and the noble men and women receive their reward.

The story turns around a feud between two families, that of Yeruham whose deceased son-in-law, Joseph, was a Maskil, and that of Gaal, the richest man in the city, who poses as a pious man and is opposed to any change in Jewish life. Gaal was at one time a clerk in the business house of Yeruham, but being deceitful, he brought ruin upon his master. He also aspired to the hand of the beautiful Sarah, the daughter of Yeruham, and when she repulsed him and married Joseph, his hatred was increased. Through his machinations, Joseph's flourishing business was shattered and he

himself died of a broken heart. Gaal continues to persecute Yeruham, his widowed daughter, and her children by various devices, mainly by spreading rumors that they are impious and transgress the Jewish laws. In his war against that family, he has allies. But Yeruham too has allies as all the enlightened stand by him. It is the struggle between the two groups of allies which forms the content of the story. Chief among the allies of Gaal is his son-in-law, Rabbi Zadok, a hypocrite of the lowest type, one who, as it turns out, committed many crimes in his youth. In the role of Gaal's son-in-law, he poses as a *Zaddik* and holy man. He is his right hand in all his evil deeds. The powerful allies of Yeruham are Saul, a friend of his deceased son-in-law, Joseph, a rich merchant with liberal ideas, and Nehemiah, a typical Maskil who devoted his energies to the improvement of Jewish life. In addition to the main theme, there are also several love affairs, the most important of which is the one between Na'aman, the grandson of Yeruham and Elishebah, the granddaughter of Obadiah, one of the allies of Gaal which makes the plot quite complicated.

As said, the development of the plot is most amateurish. It proceeds in a haphazard manner without cause or reason. Events take sudden turns in a most mysterious way. The characters in the story, which takes place in a small Lithuanian town, hail from all countries, from Italy, from the East, and from the Balkans. Thus, his chief villain, Rabbi Zadok, is an Italian Jew, son of a non-Jewish father and Jewish mother, who lived in Turkey, Macedonia, and the Balkans for years. Later he came to Lithuania, posed as a wonder-performing rabbi, and finally married the daughter of Gaal. How such a man could adapt himself to the conditions of a small Lithuanian town and be considered a holy man and a scholar is difficult to understand. Similarly, several of his other characters hail from distant places and suddenly appear on the scene, almost simultaneously in London and in Lithuania.

The characters are not persons but types. In fact, Mapu himself admitted that Rabbi Zadok is a purely imaginary character not taken from life. Still, we might have expected some semblance of orderly delineation of the personality of his types, but there is almost none. All the multifarious deeds of Zadok are not shown to us but merely told by the author and that in fragmentary manner. Likewise, Nehemiah, who plays such an important part in the story, is almost a shadow, as we are not even told his occupation. At times he ap-

pears as a preacher (Maggid), at other times as a teacher, and suddenly he is revealed as a wine-seller. How great was the naïveté of the author can be seen from the following: The last chapter in the book represents a masquerade presided over by the Prince, the lord of the town. To that masquerade, all the leading Jews are invited, including Rabbi Zadok, who appears there without arousing any protest on the part of the pious Jews who consider him a holy man. Of course, his scandalous deeds are revealed there. Yet what a strange setting for a concluding scene, a masquerade ball attended by a holy man.

However, in spite of all these defects, the book reveals the life of the period. Several characters are truly depicted and the work is permeated with the breath of life of the Lithuanian town in the fifties of the last century. We have there also all the ideals of the Maskilim, their idealization of pure love, the glorification of manual labor and chiefly of agriculture, and the denunciation of the rights of parents to force their daughters into marriages against their will. All these tendencies are strongly reflected in that book, so that after all it is a novel close to life. Mapu also did not forget to weave into his story some Palestinian scenes, as he makes one of his characters settle in the Holy Land and describe in his letters to his friends the beauties of the land, even in its desolation. To all these qualities, we must add the author's power of description which sheds a special lustre upon the book.

It is no wonder then that notwithstanding its shortcomings which were already noted even by contemporary critics, the *Ayit Zabua* exerted considerable influence upon the readers of the generation. It was the first long novel which depicted contemporary life and they saw in its kaleidoscopic panorama reflections of their own life and struggles. The influence of Mapu, though, was not limited to the readers but extended also to the writers. He was the father of the modern Hebrew novel. He was the first to express the aspirations and ideals of a whole period in a new form, that of story and fiction, and he showed his followers a new way to reach the heart of their fellow Jews and mould their opinions, that of description and living examples.

44. PEREZ SMOLENSKIN

Once the way to preach and propagate the ideals of the enlightenment by means of the novel and story was pointed out by Mapu,

it found many followers and it did not take long and there arose a man who in a comparatively short time became the dominant figure of the Haskalah fiction. That man was Perez Smolenskin (1842-1885). In fact, Smolenskin was not only the greatest novelist of his day, but also the most fertile and productive writer of that time, for his literary activity was not limited to fiction but embraced all other forms of prose literature. He distinguished himself simultaneously as essayist, critic, editor, and feuilletonist, and the number of his collected works in all these literary branches equal if not exceed that of his novels. Yet it is primarily as a writer of fiction that he was most revered and admired by his own generation and for which he was most famous, though his ability as an essayist should by no means be minimized.

His life was as checkered and as varied as his many-sided literary activity, both of which are marked by the fluctuations of the spirit of a powerful, though somewhat erratic, personality. Smolenskin was born in Monastyrshchina, a small town in White Russia. When a year old, his father fled from the city on account of a false accusation brought against him by his enemies. For several years, he wandered about leaving his wife and children to their fate. During the time, his oldest son, still a child, was seized and forcibly dragged away to military service* and was never heard from again. This tragic event, witnessed by Perez when still a child, made an indelible impression upon him and he could never forgive his brethren for their shameful practice which he denounces so severely in his novels. After a number of years, the father returned and made provisions for the education of his children by engaging a private teacher. Under that teacher, Perez studied the Bible, the Hebrew language and grammar, and some Talmud. When he reached the age of ten, young Smolenskin's father died, and he was forced to leave his home and enter the Yeshibah at Shklow where, as many other students, he supported himself by boarding in different families each day of the week. Perez studied the Talmud assiduously for several years, but soon, through the influence of his older brother, Leib, who was also a student at the Yeshibah, he made the acquaintance of

* In those days, the Russian government held the leaders of the Jewish communities responsible for a certain quota of young men who were turned over by them to military service. This system allowed the leaders to juggle matters and choose the children of the poor in substitution of the sons of the rich who paid for their freedom. As many tried to escape that service the communal heads often employed men to seize by force boys of poor families and turn them over to the military authorities.

several of the enlightened of the town. The fact became known and his troubles began. Several of the families who furnished him with his daily meals refused to feed an *Apikoros* (heretic) and finally he was expelled from the Yeshibah. He attempted to eke out a living by tutoring, but ultimately gave up the struggle and went to Lubavichi, the seat of famous Ḥassidic rabbis. Though not a Ḥassid, but rather one who was critical of the movement, he was for a time attracted by it and remained for several years at the "court" of the Rabbi. He finally left Lubavichi and sojourned the following three years successively in Smolensk, Shklow, and Moghilev. In the last-named city he served for a year both as choir-singer and preacher in one of the synagogues. He then determined to go to Odessa, the Mecca of many of the young Maskilim. Not having any money to travel by rail, he made his way thither on a freight barge, stopping in many cities on the way where he earned some money as an itinerant preacher. Upon reaching his destination, he became, like many before him, a Hebrew teacher, which occupation provided him with a meager living and allowed him leisure to perfect himself in secular knowledge. In Odessa, he also began his literary activity.

Smolenskin made his debut in the year 1866 with several articles which were published in the *ha-Meliz*, a Hebrew weekly. These were followed by his first story *ha-Gemul*, (The Reward) which is an elaboration of a German story by that name composed by the Jewish-German writer, Leo Herzberg Frankel, and an original novel *Simhat Hanef* (The Joy of the Flatterer). He then turned to his belletristic magnum opus, the *ha-Toe be-Darkē ha-Ḥayyim* (The Wanderer on the Path of Life), the first part of which was written during his stay in Odessa. At the end of the year 1867, he left that city and went to Prague and from there to Vienna. He at first intended to enter the university, and in order to support himself while a student, he learned the art of *shehitah*. However, he was not destined to become a *shohet* and instead became, like many writers before him, a proof-reader in a printing-house in which occupation he was engaged until his death. As soon as he felt that his economic needs were more or less provided for, he began to make preparations to realize his long cherished dream of publishing a Hebrew monthly and in August of the year 1868, the first number of the *ha-Shahar* (The Dawn) appeared.

The *ha-Shahar* made a stir in the Hebrew literary world by the

breadth of its program outlined by the editor, by the names of the writers who promised to become its permanent contributors, and especially by the bold tone of Smolenskin who promised in his first editorial that the periodical will be the tribunal before which the life and deeds of the Jewish people will be brought and impartially judged. It was received enthusiastically by the Maskilim of Eastern Europe. Enthusiasm alone, however, was not sufficient to continue its publication, and after eight months of incessant labor on the part of the editor who was also the most prolific contributor, proof-reader, book-keeper, and mail clerk, its publication was suspended on account of a shortage of funds. Smolenskin, however, was not the man to bow to circumstances, and he undertook a journey to Russia and several countries in Western Europe in order to raise the necessary sum for further publication of his monthly. He was successful in his endeavors, and, on his return to Vienna, he continued the publication of the *ha-Shahar* which lasted, with slight interruptions, for twelve years.

As said, Perez was the most prolific contributor of the monthly and he published almost all his novels there, such as: the *ha-Toe* in three parts, to which he later added a fourth; the *Keburat Hamor* (Indecent Burial); the *Gaon we-Sheber* (Pride and Fall); the *Gemul Yesharim* (The Reward of Righteous) in three parts; the *Nekam Brit* (The Revenge of the Covenant); and the *ha-Yerushah* (The Inheritance) in three parts, and many short stories. He contributed to it his long essays, which were practically books, where he expounded his views on the destiny of the Jewish people and the essence of Judaism as well as on current Jewish problems, besides book reviews and bibliographical notices.

In 1875 Smolenskin married, and the increase of responsibility brought about a corresponding increase in his labors, for he was forced to obtain additional work in order to support his family, as the *ha-Shahar* brought little profit. He became therefore a manager in a printing-house. His multiple labors, though, did not prevent Perez from participating actively in Jewish life. In 1874 he visited Rumania on behalf of the *Alliance Israelite* in order to investigate the Jewish situation there and rendered an extensive report to the heads of the *Alliance*. With the rise of the Palestinian movement early in the eighties of the last century, he became one of its leaders, organized the first Academic Zionist Society in Vienna and negotiated with Sir Laurence Oliphant for the settlement of large numbers

of Jews in Palestine. In 1882 Smolenskin was again forced to discontinue temporarily the publication of the *ha-Shahar* and undertook a second journey to Russia to seek support for his literary child and also to obtain subscriptions for a collected edition of his works. He was received enthusiastically by his admirers and was given financial assistance. With the money he raised, he renewed the publication of the periodical and began to publish his collected works. His health, however, gave way under the strain of incessant labor and he was stricken with pulmonary tuberculosis. For several years, he struggled with the devastating disease, working continuously at his literary tasks as editor and writer, but in the fall of 1884 he was ordered by his physician to Meran for rest and cure, and there after four months of continual illness, he died in January 1885. With the death of Smolenskin, the *ha-Shahar* ceased to appear.

In order to form a proper estimate of Smolenskin as a novelist it is necessary to cast a glance upon the main events of his life and the primary traits of his character, for he belongs to that type of writers who can never divest themselves of their personal bias and judge persons and events objectively. All their activities and productions are always impressed with the subjective stamp of their spirit. The most outstanding event in his life was his recurrent wanderings from the small town to the large city and from Eastern Europe to Western. This frequent change of scene, the vast varying panorama of Jewish and general life from that of the quiet town in White Russia to the comparatively large and modern city of Odessa and ultimately the noisy multicolored life of the capitals of Germany, Austria, and France, broadened his mind and enriched his experiences and knowledge of life and human character. The life of our author formed quite a contrast to that of Mapu and the other Hebrew novelists. Their lives, as a rule, passed in a provincial town in Russia or Galicia, and their range of vision was narrow and limited, while his was broad and wide though not always deep. A second outstanding event in his life was, that, for a number of years, he acted as an itinerant preacher, which occupation impressed itself upon his character. The tendency to preach never forsook him and is strongly projected in his novels. To this we must add the fact that Perez never received a systematic education and his knowledge, though wide, was comparatively superficial. Finally, we must take into account his time. Smolenskin appeared on the scene at a time when the Haskalah movement had already lost its naïve character,

when the results of the changes in Jewish life advocated by their champions proved disappointing to many of the enlightened. The young generation, trained in a modern way did not turn out idealists as expected, but, on the contrary, became gross materialists and seekers of pleasure, and the idyllic picture painted by the earlier Maskilim began, therefore, to fade. The war for enlightenment, however, did not cease. Many were the sore spots in the ghetto-life of the Jews of Eastern Europe which needed curing, and strong was the hold of the old form of that life upon the Jewish masses. Consequently, the champions of improvement still waged the struggle for the spread of light and knowledge, but there were some among them who saw also the dark spots in this "light" and felt that secular knowledge and mastery of languages are not the panacea to all the ills of the House of Israel. And one of these was Smolenskin.

These experiences and circumstances affected the character of our writer. His natural power of observation was deepened and strengthened by his wanderings and extensive mingling with various types of people. Likewise, his passion for knowledge and truth was increased by his struggles and the vicissitudes he encountered. It was by means of the knowledge he obtained, incomplete as it was, that he was able to rise and attain a prominent place in society. In addition, he possessed a rich imagination, impetuosity, a strong will power, and a happy combination of idealism and practical sense. Smolenskin always strove to accomplish great things, and though he was conscious of the difficulties in the way, he never wavered but believed in his own ability to overcome them. A stranger in a foreign city with few friends and supporters and without a definite occupation, he undertook to edit and publish a monthly periodical, and in spite of all difficulties, he succeeded. It is not only in the *ha-Shahar* but in all his other phases of literary activity that we meet with the same bold spirit, with the endless striving, with the passionate championing of ideals and feel the glow and warmth of a great soul. It is these qualities which enchanted the readers of his generation and made him the outstanding writer of his time, though there were many who surpassed him in knowledge and equalled him in talent. There is another trait of his character which must not be overlooked, that is his love for his people. All Hebrew writers possessed this quality, but Smolenskin surpassed them. The love for his people is a leading motive in all his works, in the bel-

letristic as well as in the publicistic. He reproaches them, lashes them unmercifully for their faults, but the reproach and rebuke come from a wounded and bleeding heart, from the heart of one to whom the welfare of his nation is the greatest aim in life.

All these traits and characteristics are strongly reflected in his novels. He strove to do great things and not the least of them was to write long and complicated novels. His works are, therefore, distinguished by their length. Almost all of them with the exception of *Nekam Brit* and the *ha-Gamul* exceed the novels of the preceding writers, including even the *Ayit Zabua* of Mapu in length; and if the plot did not suffice for the spinning of the narrative for hundreds of pages, he added extraneous matter, or frequently wrote whole chapters, or long introductions to chapters, containing discussions on philosophical questions, social problems, literary criticism, or other subjects related to Jewish or general life. This desire to teach and preach was, as indicated, a fundamental trait in Smolenskin's character, and consequently his novels are permeated with its spirit. Like all writers of the Haskalah he did not subscribe to the slogan, "Art for art's sake," but wrote for the sake of inculcating certain ideas, of pointing out the evils in the ghetto life and of endeavoring to improve it. He differs, though, from all of them by the extent and grandeur of his canvas. He was the first to widen the horizon of the Hebrew novel which hitherto was limited to the small Russian town. He depicts Jewish life both in the ghetto and out of it, in the "Pale" and beyond it, namely the life in the large cities of Russia and the metropolises of Western Europe. His characters represent all types of Jews, the student of the Yeshibah, the hypocrite, the arrogant heads of small Jewish communities, the *Maskil*, as well as the new types, products of a changed Jewish life, the intellectual assimilationists, the unsympathetic *nouveau riche*, the stock exchange speculator, and a motley of nondescripts hailing from Russia, from Hungary, Austria, and other countries.

In company with the other writers of the generation, he devotes the most important of his novels to the problem of the eradication of evils in Jewish life, to the war against ignorance and the mismanagement of Jewish communities by its leaders, and advocates the spread of enlightenment; but differs from them by dropping the naïveté and seeing also the reverse side of the medal, namely the disappointing results of the Haskalah. Smolenskin does not possess the bitterness of a Gordon against the rigid Orthodox, nor does he

share the acrimony of a Lilienblum. He knows the faults of the ghetto life and his novels are replete with types of wicked men, but he also sees the finer sides of that life and points them out to the enlightened. It is for this reason that we find our writer painting in his *ha-Toe* the Yeshibah in rather dark colors and in another novel speaking of it with glowing emotion, picturing it as the seminary of the finest type of Jews and as the store-house of Jewish idealism. In fact, two of his noblest characters, Simon in *Simhat Hanef* and Isaiah in *Gemul Yesharim* are former Yeshibah students. True, their nobility is greatly enhanced by their acquisition of secular knowledge and by the happy combination of Torah with a mastery of science and literature, but the foundation of their fine characters was laid in the Talmudical academies. In contradistinction to most of the writers of the Haskalah who disparaged openly or covertly the belief that the Jews are a chosen people, Smolenskin defends this view and makes one of his characters assert with vehemence that such is the case. For proof, he cites the fact that the Jews are so intensely devoted to the Torah, and that thousands of their children spend their lives in its study without expectation of reward, but for the sake of learning; and he concludes by asserting that such a phenomenon is not paralleled among other nations. Similar passages breathing with love and reverence for his people could be multiplied many times and they indicate the position of Smolenskin who, though steeped in the ideology of the Haskalah, opened the gate to a world beyond it.

In attempting to determine the literary value of the novels of Smolenskin at a distance of half a century, we must conclude that they undoubtedly fall short of our conception of a good novel if measured by the standards of today, still, they possess a number of good qualities. The writer was a good observer of life and possessed great power of description. Consequently the life portrayed in his novels has a ring of reality. Furthermore, his vivid imagination was of great service to him in combining apparently unrelated facts and events in a single plot. He thus displays greater skill than Mapu in the development of his plots and is more successful in producing a related sequence of events in the story.

On the other hand, Smolenskin's novels possess grave faults, which detract much from their value, the chief of which is the impetuosity of the author. He did not develop the plan of his novels completely before writing them so as to make each story an organic whole. He

seemed to have composed them in parts. In fact, as mentioned, most of them were printed in long series of installments in the *ha-Shahar*, with long intervals between the component sections. Consequently, there is no inner unity, though the author endeavored to coordinate the various events in a related sequence. One of his novels, *Gaon ve-Sheber* is hardly entitled to that name as it is primarily a collection of short stories, related by a group of people at one place and one time.

There is also little variety in his themes. In general, there is really one theme which is presented under different aspects, and that is the struggle in life between good and bad people and the ultimate triumph of the righteous. There is always one or more villains in the story who endeavor to block the path of the good and noble characters, but of course, all their machinations and schemes are always frustrated in the end and the cause of justice triumphs. In the typical Haskalah novels of Smolenskin, the villains are mortal enemies of enlightenment, who persecute the noble characters for their desire to acquire knowledge. In his other novels, they are ordinary pleasure-seeking people with proclivities for wickedness who do not hesitate to remove the man who obstructs their path by any means, not barring that of crime. There is also great similarity in the characters, and one can be often exchanged for the other, for Smolenskin had not advanced much beyond the writers of his age who drew types rather than persons. He philosophizes much and discusses human life extensively, but lacks psychological depth and seldom gives us an insight into the inner soul of his characters.

In addition, there is exaggeration in the picture of Jewish life as presented in his novels. There was undoubtedly some evil in that life in spite of the prevailing piety and religiosity, but it is very doubtful whether such persons as Menasseh, the chief villain of the *ha-Toe*, or Zebadia (Keburat Hamor) actually ever existed. Smolenskin, in his desire to preach, paints these characters in the darkest colors and makes them commit many crimes. On the whole, he employs too frequently and excessively the devices of falsehood, greed, lust, and all other infernal passions in the development of his plots, and in general there is a certain monotony in the activities of his villains. If we should judge Jewish life of two generations ago according to the novels of our author, we would have to conclude that informing and false accusations against fellow-Jews were the order of the day,

which is contrary to fact, for we know the great abhorrence in which a "Moser" (informer) was held by the Jews. And yet the noble characters of Smolenskin's novels are invariably arrested on charges of false accusations by their enemies. In some novels, as in the *ha-Toe*, this happens more than half a dozen times. All this is due to the inner tendency of the preacher to exaggerate the evils in life in order to concentrate the attention upon its correction.

On the other hand, our author is successful and comparatively true to reality in his general description of Jewish life when it is detached from a particular character. We have numerous scenes of that life, in all its vicissitudes, described by the hand of a master. We see the Jew in his joys and sorrows at home, in the market place, and in the synagogue; we learn the evils of the ghetto life, but also its bright side, for Smolenskin with all his desire for change saw it from all angles, and many a description of his sheds glory upon Jewish life of the near past.

Finally, we should note the absence of nature description in Smolenskin's novels. He is primarily the novelist of life, of the scenes of passion and struggles. Nature has no interest for him. It is too static and too slow-moving for his impetuous nature.

Turning to a more detailed analysis of the novels of Smolenskin, we can observe generally that the six long novels which constitute his main contribution to Hebrew belles-lettres fall into two distinct groups. The first group comprises those stories which depict Jewish life in the small town with all its evils and shortcomings, and the purpose of which was to show that it is all due to lack of enlightenment and knowledge. The second group embraces all novels in which the life pictured is that of the Jews in the large cities which is greatly assimilated to the type of the general life. To the first group belong the *ha-Toe*, the *Keburat Hamor* and the *Gemul Yesharim*; to the second, the *Simhat Hanef*, the *Gaon we-Sheber*, and the *ha-Yerushah*. The purpose expressed in the latter seems to be a criticism of the type of Jewish life beyond the ghetto.

The *ha-Toe*, which can be considered the most important novel of Smolenskin, is written in the form of an autobiography by the hero, Joseph. He is portrayed as a wanderer in life, who strove to be a righteous man but circumstances always caused his deviation from the right path. The story of his life, relating his wanderings from city to city and from country to country, really presents a cross-section of the entire Jewish life in all its aspects, both in the ghettos

of Russia and of the new Jewish settlements in the metropolises of Western Europe.

He begins by telling us that when he was yet a young child, he was orphaned both by his father and mother. He did not remember his father, but the picture of his mother and her death remained with him. Before her death, she gave him a letter asking him to deliver it to his uncle who would take charge of him. The uncle arrived after some time and took him to his home. He was very kind to Joseph, but the aunt showed great animosity towards him and persecuted him maliciously. He could not bear the persecutions and was finally persuaded by an older boy, a student of the Yeshibah, to steal some money from his uncle and run away together with him. At the very beginning of the journey, he was deceived by the older boy who took his money from him and disappeared, leaving Joseph alone in the world.

This forms the background of the canvas upon which the many strands of the variegated story of the life of the wanderer are woven. His wanderings then begin. He first joins a troupe of beggars; an old man, one of the troupe, befriends him and treats him as a son. Upon the death of the old beggar, Joseph becomes the servant (shamash) of an itinerant wonder-worker (Ba'al Shem) and travels with him first to Odessa and then through many towns and cities watching him perform miracles and deceive the people. The orphan, who is a close observer of life, practices some deceptions of his own upon the *Ba'al Shem*, takes his money and runs away. Not having any trade or profession, he becomes a singer in the choir of a famous cantor in a large city where his experiences of human wickedness become greatly enriched. There he comes in contact for the first time with the villain of the book, a certain Menasseh, the head of the Jewish community who poses as a pious man and insists upon the punishment of a young *Agunah* for her crime of conversing with a man. He also strikes up a friendship with another singer in the choir, a man by the name of Dan. Dan, who is older than Joseph and more experienced in the ways of life and is versed in the Bible and the Hebrew language, becomes his teacher and also reveals to him the deeds of Menasseh. It turns out that Menasseh is the very person who deceived Joseph when he ran away from his uncle's home and that he committed many crimes and brought ruin upon many families, among them that of the father of the *Agunah* and also upon the family of Dan. He also

learns of the tragedy of his own family, namely that his uncle at the instigation of his wife brought ruin upon his father by charging him falsely with the manufacture of counterfeit money, an act which caused his arrest and his ultimate suicide. Joseph who is thus made wise in the ways of life around him, abhors his own conduct and searches for a new way in life. Dan advises him to go to the famous Yeshibah at Shklow and study there, offering to provide him with a letter of introduction to an older student named Gideon who will act as his mentor. He accepts the advice and goes to Shklow. Thus ends the first part with its kaleidoscopic panorama of events in the hero's private life and the episodes of Jewish life in general.

In the second part, we are introduced to the life of the Lithuanian Yeshibot. The picture Smolenskin draws of it is far from attractive, yet his noblest characters are all ex-students of these academies, for he was not blind to the salutary influence exerted by the study of the Torah. One of these characters is Gideon to whom Joseph was introduced. Gideon, who is a great Talmudic scholar as well as "enlightened," introduces also our hero to the Haskalah with the result that both are expelled from the Yeshibah and fall in the hands of the "searchers" (see Note on p. 279) who arrest the young men who have no passports for the purpose of turning them over to military service. Gideon is released first, for it turns out that he has a passport, and Joseph is released some time later, when the new law abolishing such seizures goes into effect. After his release Joseph decides to leave Shklow and enter another Yeshibah, but by a coincidence of events, he comes to Lubavichi instead and joins the "court" of the Hassidic Rabbi.

In the third part, we are presented with a strange concatenation of events and happenings in the life of our hero which hang together only by the threads of the imagination of the author. Joseph tells of his sojourn in the house of the *Zaddik* and reveals the intrigues of the Hassidic "court-life," though he spares the *Zaddik* himself. He is finally expelled from there because of his strictures against Hassidism. He settles in a neighboring city and comes in contact with another villain of the type of Menasseh, becomes a tool in his hands, and when he attempts to frustrate his plans, he is put into prison again. Through the help of some Maskilim, he is released and leaves for Odessa, but on his way, he stops at Shklow and is engaged there by a merchant, a friend of the Yeshibah days, as manager of his business. There he falls in love with Shifra, the

granddaughter of his master who had captivated his heart when he had visited the house as a student. The mother of Shifra is sick and the doctor advises a cure abroad. The daughter and Joseph accompany her. On the way, he recognizes in Shifra's mother his hated aunt and at first plans to leave mother and daughter, but changes his mind and continues upon his journey. While traveling on a boat to Sweden, a storm breaks out and the aunt is swept away by the waves; Shifra becomes insane, and is taken to an asylum where she dies. The wanderer continues on his journey, comes to Hamburg where he wins a large sum of money in a lottery drawing, loses it and joins an actor's troupe. In his wanderings, he meets his former master, the *Ba'al Shem*, who tells him many stories about his former friends and also informs him that the father of Joseph,—not knowing the identity of his interlocutor,—did not commit suicide but escaped from prison and went to America where he became very rich, and that at present he resides in London. Joseph goes to London but cannot find his father. There again he is in a sorry plight, but makes the acquaintance of a young woman who aids him. He visits her home and instructs her in Hebrew. The acquaintance ripens into love but her brother drives him out of the house upon which Joseph challenges him to a duel with the result that his antagonist is killed and he is wounded. After lying unconscious for many days, he recovers and finds that the young lady is his sister and his antagonist was his brother, both children of his father who had remarried. His father dies from grief at the tragedy. The wanderer thus loses his nearest relatives but gains wealth, as he inherits part of his father's riches.

The fourth part contains little action but much reflection. Joseph, after recovering completely, could not remain in London. He begins to wander again, and in his letters to his sister relates his observations of Jewish life in various countries. We are treated to glimpses of that life in Paris, Brussels, Berlin, Rumania, and Odessa whither he returned. We hear much criticism of Jewish life in all places, especially of the results of the Haskalah in Russia. Yet Joseph does not give up his Haskalah ideal. He outlines a plan for a new type of schools where a happy combination of pure Judaism and worldly knowledge should be taught. The wanderer is approaching the end of his travels. He defends his brethren in a pogrom that breaks out in Odessa, is wounded in the fray, and finally dies as a result of his wounds. The happy ending, however, is not miss-

ing though it is a secondary one, for his sister is married to his old friend Gideon who becomes a professor in a university in Switzerland.

As we can see there is a certain general unity in the highly complicated plot of the *ha-Toe*, but not of the inner and organic type, only an external one which is accomplished by the use of certain devices. In fact, one of the devices, the escape of Joseph's father from prison, his flight to America, and subsequent acquisition of wealth is not original with Smolenskin but is borrowed either from Mapu's *Ayit Zabua* or from romantic novels of the day in European languages where similar devices were employed in order to supply the desired happy ending. Smolenskin himself resorted to it again in his last novel *ha-Yerushah* (The Inheritance) where the inheritance left by a rich immigrant in the new world to his poor relatives in his native country is the very backbone of the plot. The complications and the variety of the plot can be easily explained by the purpose of the author. His aim was to present a cross-section of the Jewish life of the day with all its faults and dark spots. He, therefore, crowded into one story as many phases of that life as possible, paying little attention to the organic unity of the events, as long as the autobiographical narrative of the wandering hero supplied the uniting thread for the numerous evils and various phases of that life.

This aim also explains the exaggeration in the description of that life. The drawing of his villains, Menasseh, Yehorib, and the *Ba'al Shem* is done by Smolenskin in lurid colors. Menasseh commits many crimes, ruins a number of families, employs numerous devices and guises to mask his identity, and ultimately becomes the head of an important Jewish community, all of which transpire in the short space of nine years. It is superfluous to point out that such a person never existed and could not exist in Jewish life, but that he is merely an exaggerated abstraction of the evils of Jewish communal leadership. In the *ha-Toe*, Smolenskin intended to concentrate the attention upon several gross evils frequent in those days, namely the abuse of the power of communal leadership by unscrupulous men, the baneful influence of Hassidism and its leaders upon the Jewish masses, the ignorance of these masses, and hypocrisy of the itinerant saints or wonder-workers. Of the more particular evils prevalent at the time referred to by our author are to be noted the frequency of false accusations, though hardly in the measure described by him, and the practice of seizing the sons of the poor and turning them

over to military service instead of the children of the rich. Smolenskin, whose brother was torn away from his home in this manner never to return, depicts these scenes with malice.

The remedy of all these evils lay, according to the author, in the spread of enlightenment, hence the story is interwoven with the struggle between the villains who are enemies of the Haskalah and the various types of Maskilim who take part in the development of events. The hero himself, Joseph, though, is far from being the type of the ideal Maskil. He is only potentially a noble character but his striving toward the good is thwarted by circumstances and the evil inclinations of the people with whom he comes in contact. The aim of the author was to depict the baleful influence exerted by a social environment upon the individual who attempts to rise above its moral level.

Yet, though Smolenskin was wont to exaggerate the ills of the Jewish life at the time, he was not insensible to its good qualities. In several of his discourses intermingled with the narrative, he eulogizes the love of learning of the Jews and their devotion to the Torah with great pathos. Similarly, the chapter devoted by him to the description of the Day of Atonement breathes with glowing emotion and genuine love for Judaism. It is for the same reason that in the fourth part of the *ha-Toe*, we note disillusion on the part of the author in the results of the Haskalah which is zealously advocated in the first three parts. His observing eye detected new flaws in the Jewish life of the post-Haskalah period and he regrets the disappearance of the qualities of the old forms of that life. He is still hopeful that a certain harmonious combination between the old and the new can be effected. But this is given to us more in the form of a pious wish in the letter of the dying Joseph, rather than as an elaborate plan.

The *Keburat Hamor* is in reality a smaller edition of the *ha-Toe*. Its hero, Jacob Hayyim, is, like Joseph the orphan, a man who possesses all potentialities for becoming a good and noble person, but by force of circumstances loses his way in life and goes from bad to worse until he reaches his tragic end. This episode, though, constitutes the difference in the fates of these two heroes, for while Joseph is rewarded toward the end of his life by coming into riches and dying a noble death in defense of his brethren, Jacob Hayyim is murdered and is given a disgraceful burial.

The plot which like that of the *ha-Toe*, deals with the theme of

abuses in communal leadership and the dominance of superstition, can be summarized in a few words.

Jacob Ḥayyim, a distinguished Talmudic student in the Yeshibah at Shklow and also a Maskil, decides one day to play a prank upon the leading members of the Burial Society. He steals, on the night of their annual feast, the delectable cakes which were wont to come as the crowning dish of a sumptuous meal. When the theft is discovered the officers are very wroth, for the cakes constituted a traditional feature of the feast. At a special meeting, the indignant president, Shemarya Gezil, insists that the thief, whose identity became known but who had meanwhile escaped, should be given, if he ever settled in that city again, a disgraceful burial. By a freak of fate, the same Jacob Ḥayyim is married four years later to the granddaughter of the president of the society, for the incident was forgotten and his identity was not known. However, our hero being light-minded and boastful, reveals the secret to his bride and the matter becomes known to the president himself. His anger rises and he insists upon separating the couple, but Jacob Ḥayyim refuses to divorce his young bride and leaves the city a second time.

This time Jacob Ḥayyim makes the acquaintance of the governor of the province and becomes a man of the world. He remains loyal to his wife who is likewise loyal to him and refuses to be divorced, though she has a suitor by the name of Zebadiah who offers to go in search of her husband. Through some trick, Jacob Ḥayyim is restored to the favor of Shemarya Gezil, his wife's grandfather. He comes to Shklow, and disguised as his dead father, intercepts the president on his return from the synagogue at night and admonishes him to reunite Jacob Ḥayyim and his wife. Shemarya Gezil, frightened, obeys the order, and as a result the hero is received favorably by the people of the town and is made secretary of the community. Zebadiah, though, remains his enemy, and utilizing the boastfulness of Jacob Ḥayyim discovers his secret and informs the leaders of the community of the ruse which results in his removal from office. In order to revenge himself upon his enemies he turns informer and consequently many members of the community are indicted for smuggling. The community rises against him and he is excommunicated and persecuted. Jacob Ḥayyim repents and is about to ask for pardon, but Zebadiah, who still hopes to gain the favor of his wife at his death, thwarts his purpose and to consum-

mate his wickedness, hires a peasant to kill the unfortunate man. The old decree of disgraceful burial is then carried out, and his wife, in her bitterness and from a desire to revenge herself upon the Jews of the community, embraces the Christian religion.

That there is gross exaggeration in this story goes without saying, though some writers, contemporaries of Smolenskin, stated that it was based on a real episode which occurred in that city. The tendency of our author to paint the evils of Jewish life in much darker colors than they were in reality is very pronounced in this novel. The main purpose of the *Keburat Hamor* seems to have been to show how the life of a man, who, under normal circumstances could have become a useful member of the community, is ruined through the influence of the social environment in which he moves. Yet this purpose was not accomplished, for the hero, though his tragic end arouses our sympathy, fails to evoke our admiration. His struggles against the high-handedness of the community leaders is not carried on for idealistic purposes but for personal interests. There is, of course, an attempt on the part of the author to interweave in the struggle the motive of opposition to Haskalah, as we are told that the animosity to Jacob Hayyim on the part of the other leaders was due to the fact that he was an enlightened and impious man. But that neither explains nor justifies the action of the hero in turning informer, in order to revenge himself upon the leaders for removing him from office.

The other defects common in all the novels, namely the lack of psychological analysis and strict unity in the plot are also in evidence here. The sequence of events is, on the whole, more coordinated, but the transition from one episode to another is sudden and we have to infer the causes of such transition from the statements of the author. On the other hand, the *Keburat Hamor* is distinguished by fine descriptions of certain scenes in Jewish life, especially scenes of group life.

The *Gemul Yesharim*, though belonging to the first group, is not a typical Haskalah novel, for it aims not to describe primarily the defects in Jewish life caused by lack of knowledge but rather to decry the results of false enlightenment which lead to assimilation and to wasteful sacrifices by the Jewish youth upon the altar of their neighbors. The main theme of the plot is the participation of the hero, Emil, the son of Shemarya, a Maskil, and the manager of the estates of a Polish nobleman, in the Polish uprising against the

Russians in 1863. Emil, who was given a modern education by his father, despises the gloomy atmosphere of the ghetto-life, associates with the young Polish noblemen, and is especially friendly with the young lord of the town in which his family dwells, and even falls in love with his sister who returns his affection. He is drawn into the net of the revolt. But a series of events, which show him the duplicity of the Poles and their hatred for the Jews, convince him of the futility of assimilation and he ultimately returns to his people.

The novel, however, retains enough of the elements of the Haskalah struggle to entitle it to a place among stories of that type. The scene, through the greater part of the book, is laid in a small Jewish community, this time a Polish one, with its typical life which was, with few exceptions, little affected by the modern spirit. The exceptions constitute a rather peculiar phenomenon noted among the Polish Jews. The pious Hassidim, while they remained inveterate enemies of the enlightened and refrained from imparting to their sons any secular knowledge, often trained their daughters in Catholic schools. The result of such training was that the daughters, saturated with a strange culture, despised their parents, their mode of life, and their people. And when their parents wanted to force upon them Yeshibah students as husbands, tragedies occurred, for the modern daughters frequently had Gentile lovers. Several tragic episodes of this nature are interwoven in this novel. Otherwise, we meet with the old scenes and types, the Yeshibah with its one-sided life, the leading members of the community who still are opposed to the Haskalah, though their hatred is expressed in a much milder form than hitherto, and the Maskil, Shemarya, whose fine conduct is drawn in contrast to that of the others. Finally, there rises before us the second hero, Isaiah, an enlightened Yeshibah student, a protégé of Shemarya, who ultimately becomes a famous advocate in the metropolis but retains his devotion to Judaism and to his people.

On the other hand, we miss in this novel the exaggerations, the crimes, and the startling events of the *ha-Toe* and the *Keburat Hamor*. The development of the plot is defective as there is little action but much discussion of a philosophical nature. Contrary to the tragic and semi-tragic endings of the other two novels, we have here a complete happy ending. Emil leaves Poland, settles in Austria, where, due to his military experience during the revolt,

he becomes a colonel in the Austrian army and even marries the Polish woman whom he loved, who becomes a Jewess. Isaiah who, as said, attained fame, marries the daughter of Shemarya, and thus are the righteous, namely the enlightened Jews who love and work for their people, rewarded. In this novel, Smolenskin for the first time produced a positive noble Jewish type and that is Isaiah, who embodies Smolenskin's idea of the ideal Maskil. On the whole the *Gemul Yesharim*, is one of our author's best novels.

Of the second group of novels which deal with general human subjects and where the Jewish life depicted is primarily that of the large cities, the first is the *Simhat Hanef* (The Joy of the Flatterer). It is, as stated above, the very first novel of Smolenskin, and the development of the plot is woefully defective. In fact, there is hardly any plot, for the whole story could easily be condensed in a few pages. It depicts two friends, both engaged as Hebrew teachers in the city of Odessa, but of different characters. The first, David, is light-minded and pleasure-loving. His modernity consists primarily in his elegant attire and graceful ways with women. The second, Simon, is a man of great learning and an ardent idealist. Both love the same girl, Shifra by name, a former pupil of Simon. David, who is more forward, is victorious. David, however, has a wife whom he left in Warsaw, the city of his birth. He endeavors to forget the fact, hoping that she will never locate him and makes preparations to marry Shifra. On the wedding day, though, the *Agunah* appears together with her child, and the proposed marriage does not take place. Shifra then marries Simon, and David, tortured by remorse, commits suicide.

This rather short and abortive story is expanded by our author to the extent of two hundred and fifty pages. Most of them are filled with literary discussions, especially on the character of the two classical dramas, Hamlet and Faust, as well as discourses on love, life, the Jewish people, and similar subjects. In those discussions, Smolenskin expresses through the mouth of Simon his views on all these topics. Simon, a former Yeshibah student, is here represented as a noble positive type of a Jewish Maskil, and Smolenskin thus pays his tribute to the Yeshibah which, with all its defects, could produce such a person. His character, however, is drawn rather loosely, more by words than by a series of events. In addition to these discourses, the book is filled with scenes from Jewish life in Odessa, a life where the habits and the ways of the ghetto mingle

with new forms of conduct acquired through a conscious effort at assimilation to a changed environment. The descriptive part, however, is greatly overbalanced by the discursive, yet we do get occasionally fine glimpses of that life. The expression of his views on weighty subjects seemed though to have been the primary aim of our author in his first attempt at novel writing.

The *Gaon ve-Sheber* (Pride and Fall) is, as indicated, really not a novel but a collection of short stories joined together by the single thread of the simultaneity of the time and place at which the stories were told. The background for the unity is supplied by the introductory story telling of the crash on the Vienna stock exchange which wiped out the fortunes of many rich Jewish speculators, and as a result a number of them were forced to flee the country. A group of these fugitives meet in Hamburg and decide to keep together on board ship which is taking them to the United States. In order to while away the time, it is proposed that each member of the group relate either his own biography or that of one of his friends, and the collection of stories is the outcome of the tales. The heroes of the stories are mostly miniature editions of wanderers in life who were torn from their moorings and tossed upon the stormy waves of the boiling and seething life of the large city and, of course, lost their way. There is, however, one exception where the hero overcame all obstacles in his way and guarded himself against the pitfalls strewn in his path and ceased to be a wanderer. The short stories are marked with all the defects of Smolenskin's longer novels, namely long discourses upon the problems of life and suddenness in the transpiring of events, but are distinguished by their descriptions, and some even by an attempt at a deeper psychological analysis of the characters of the heroes.

The *ha-Yerushah* was the last long novel written by Smolenskin. It consists of three parts and its plot is very complicated. The book resembles to a certain degree that of the *ha-Toe* in its complexity, in its exaggeration, in the crimes committed by the villains, in the sudden inheritance motive which plays a most important part here and the wide extent of Jewish life which it reveals. The main difference is that the life depicted here is almost entirely of the new type, namely that of the large city. The vicissitudes of the hero, Zerahya, are also different from those of Joseph. Like him, he passes through a number of cities, such as Odessa, several cities in Rumania, and finally Vienna; unlike him, however, he is not

a Yeshibah student but a modern Hebrew teacher, and the episodes are therefore modernized. It is also full of evils but of a different kind. Their source is the love of pleasure and greed. Love plays an important part in this novel. We have some references to the Haskalah struggle and much philosophizing upon the problems of life and the duty of the individual to society, but the real struggle is between good and bad people in general. The sequence of events is here even more defective than in *ha-Toe*. The book is replete with sudden turns and the concatenation of happenings is of a miraculous nature. The ending is a happy one; all the efforts of the villains are frustrated and the lovers are happily married. It is interesting to note that though the book is named "The Inheritance," the author forgets to give to the hero his rightful portion in spite of the fact that the rich relative is searching assiduously for him and resides only a short distance from him. This may be explained by the fact that the last chapters were written by Smolenskin on his death-bed in a confused state of mind.

There is one more novel, a short one written by Smolenskin during the last period of his life and that is the *Nekam-Brit*. The theme is not entirely a new one, for it was touched upon in the *Gemul Yesharim*, but is here dealt with more explicitly, and that is the return of the assimilated youth to their people. The hero, a university student and the son of an assimilated family, who at first refused to heed the signs of the times expressed in the pogroms of 1882, and still clings to his views, ultimately changes them. The change comes about through personal experience, and he finally becomes an ardent nationalist.

Smolenskin thus covered in his novels the entire period of Haskalah and even reached beyond it. If not for his premature death, he would undoubtedly have written a series of novels illuminating Jewish life during the post-Haskalah period as brightly as that of the preceding one, for with all his defects, he was a great social novelist.

45. MORDECAI DAVID BRANDSTÄDTER

Smolenskin was not the only one who carried on the struggle for Haskalah in his novels and stories. He had many followers who employed the same means in order to spread enlightenment among the Jews. One of the important among his followers was Mordecai David Brandstädter (1844-1927). But though he was a great admirer of Smolenskin, and though it was he who was instrumental

in making Brandstädter a Hebrew novelist, yet the latter differed greatly from his master, both in his method and in the content of his stories. The difference may be partly explained by his life. Brandstädter did not experience the intense struggle for the acquisition of secular knowledge which was the common lot of most of the writers of the day, nor did he suffer the pangs of poverty, nor the persecution of the zealots, nor did he go through the tantalizing vicissitudes of a wanderer searching for some mooring in order to secure a living for himself and family. He was spared all these tribulations. His life ran smoothly without meeting any obstacles. Born in a small town in Galicia in the home of wealthy parents, he knew no want in his youth. He was educated not in the Yeshibah but was instructed privately by a great Talmudic scholar engaged by his father for the purpose of preparing him for the Rabbinate. At the age of fifteen, he was sent to Rymanow to study in the house of a local rabbi and to gain experience in Rabbinical practices. His destiny, however, lay in a different direction, for within a year he was married to the daughter of a rich merchant at Tarnow. In his father-in-law's house he found, through the mediacy of an old Maskil, the path to enlightenment and decided to become a merchant instead of a rabbi; he retained, however, his interest in literature and knowledge.

Brandstädter made his literary debut, according to the manner of the time, by publishing in the various Galician periodicals some poems and several articles translated from the German. At that time Smolenskin began to publish the *ha-Shahar*, and Brandstädter, on one of his business journeys to Vienna, met the famous editor. With much trepidation, he submitted to the judgment of the great writer one of his short stories. To Brandstädter's great surprise, the story was immediately published in the *ha-Shahar* and he was invited by Smolenskin to contribute regularly to that periodical. Henceforth, he became the most prolific short story writer of the Haskalah period.

The stories of Brandstädter differ from the rest of the belletristic productions of the age not only by their brevity and their limitation to one or two episodes of life, but primarily by their light spirit. He is no preacher, nor does he champion the cause of the Haskalah with heavy cannon balls but rather with the light thrusts of the lance of humor and satire. His environment, which served as the background of the stories, is that of the life of the Hassidic Jewish

communities in the smaller and larger towns of Galicia. The themes deal mostly with struggles between the Ḥassidim and their leaders, the *Zaddikim*, who endeavored to maintain the status quo in Jewish life on the one hand, and the enlightened who wanted to change it on the other hand. The struggle is of a much milder nature than the one depicted by Smolenskin or others, for in Galicia, the situation was vastly different from that in Lithuania or Poland. The enlightened had a firmer hold upon life and the opposing party found itself more on the defensive than on the offensive.

Brandstädter was a very good observer of the life around him, and he passes before us pictures of that life in which we see its defects in the light of humor. He shows us the risible side of that life. The characters of the Ḥassidim are not drawn as wicked or ruthless, but as of men inexperienced in the ways of the world (*Batlanim*), as of grown naïve children. It is for this reason that in the struggle between the two groups, the enlightened are always victorious. But the shafts of his humor are not always directed against the Ḥassidim, but quite frequently, their target are the enlightened. With great skill, he shows us the superficiality of the enlightened who attend the university not to gain knowledge but to attain a career, and ultimately to marry the daughter of a rich man who will be willing to pay handsomely for their titles. The enlightened of the new generation are devoid of all idealism, and in comparison with the Maskilim of the previous generation, they are opportunists and are even ready to compromise with the Ḥassidic life provided they except themselves from the rigors of that life. We have, therefore, in Brandstädter's stories several such comic types where physicians and lawyers who allow themselves to transgress all laws, nevertheless lead Jewish communities and direct their activities in good Ḥassidic style. There are, though, some types of Maskilim who are still animated by the spirit of idealism.

The leading motive in Brandstädter's stories is the marriage tangle. As was noted above, the Ḥassidim in Poland and especially in Galicia, while they guarded their sons from any contact with secular knowledge, were rather lax in regard to their daughters and frequently gave them a liberal education. But when the time for marriage came, they insisted upon choosing for them Talmudic scholars as husbands. The daughters very seldom agreed to such matches. This situation gave rise to many tragedies, but at times to situations which ended in comedies. Often the daughters had lovers, en-

lightened ones, and both the brides and their lovers employed all means in order to frustrate the plans of the parents. It is episodes such as these that form the themes of Brandstädter's stories. In almost all of them, the lovers are victorious. The schemes employed by them are often comical and display the superstition, the naïveté, and the ignorance of the Hassidim. They are supernatural miracles manufactured by the enlightened lovers, and the believers obey their command and marry off their daughters to the very people whom they erstwhile abhorred. Some stories deal with the life of the *Zaddikim*, but even here the author does not attack them but merely places them in a ludicrous light.

On the whole, the stories of Brandstädter reveal to us phases of Jewish life in Galicia at a time when it was passing from its old form into an indefinite new one. These phases are well drawn and the stories impart to the readers a certain pleasure by the skillful portrayal of the humorous situations in life. In a later period he tried to inject into his stories the element of the national revival, but was not as successful with his new device as with his old ones. Brandstädter belongs primarily to the Haskalah period.

46. REUBEN ASHER BROYDES

The Haskalah movement which gradually gathered strength turned towards the end of the period from its course of defense hitherto pursued and became militant. Its leaders were not satisfied any more to champion the cause of enlightenment and plead for the spread of secular knowledge among the Jews. In fact, the slowly changing conditions of life made such pleading superfluous. They, therefore, devoted themselves to the task of improving the religious life of the community, and vigorous demands were made in the Hebrew periodical press of the time by writers and essayists that reforms be introduced in the practice of religious observances. The leaders of staunch Orthodoxy, frightened by the attempts to change the religious life in any manner, zealously opposed such moves, and as a result, a battle was waged in many Jewish communities between the champions of the *status quo* in religion and the innovators. The battle was primarily waged in the publicistic literature of the time but its echo also reverberated in the novels of the period and chiefly in those of Reuben Asher Broydes (1851-1903).

Broydes was born in Wilna. He was educated in the Heder and

Yeshibah, where he became very proficient in Talmudic lore. At the age of thirteen, he lost his father, and from that time on he became a wandering student. He soon found his way to Haskalah and made his literary debut in the *ha-Lebanon*, one of the periodicals of the time, conducted in the spirit of the conservative Maskilim. Later though, he became contributor to the more liberal periodicals and ultimately emerged as a novelist by publishing his first story in the *ha-Shahar* in 1873. Henceforth, he became a prolific writer and contributed short stories to many periodicals of the time. He was at first engaged as a teacher in many cities of Russia, but from the year 1876 he chose literature as a profession, and for a time was associated with A. B. Gottlober (Sec. 40) in the editing and publishing of the monthly periodical *ha-Boker Or*. Subsequently, he came to Rumania and published in Bucharest a Yiddish newspaper. After two years, he was expelled from the country as an alien Jew who had no right of domicile and settled in Lemberg, Galicia. There he spent a great part of his life and engaged in various literary pursuits as editor of short-lived periodicals and as contributor to both Hebrew and Yiddish journals. With the rise of the Zionist movement, Broydes became one of the followers of Herzl, and in 1900, he was appointed by him as editor of the Yiddish section of the official Zionist weekly *Die Welt*, and for that purpose settled in Vienna. He did not continue long in this position, for his wanderings and the want he suffered for many years undermined his health and he became the prey of a fatal disease which brought his death at the age of fifty-two.

Broydes wrote many short stories and two long novels, the *ha-Dat we-ha-Hayyim* (Religion and Life) and the *Shetê ha-Keẓowot* (The Two Extremes). In his short stories, he is more the artist and novelist than the preacher. His main concern is to record certain episodes of life and depict the events, and in this he succeeded more than the other writers of his day. But in his longer novels, the Haskalah tendency of the age crops out. It is especially evident in the *ha-Dat we-ha-Hayyim*, where the demand for reforms in religious observances is the theme of the novel. In his preface to the book, the author attempts to convey the impression that he tells the story from an objective point of view and that his purpose is only to record the events of the struggle for religious reforms which was waged in the Lithuanian communities during the years 1864-1871. But the case is not so. Broydes himself is deeply interested in the sub-

ject, and like Smolenskin, he devotes whole chapters of a publicistic nature to prove the urgent necessity of adjusting religion to the exigencies of life.

The plot is a very simple one and its development takes place in quite a natural manner. It contains nothing of the complicated grotesqueness and the imaginary sudden turns of events with which we meet so frequently in the stories of Smolenskin but reflects a series of episodes which took place at that time in some of the Jewish communities in Lithuania. The story is as follows:

Samuel, the hero of the book, a great Talmudic scholar, influenced by his teacher, one of the liberal orthodox rabbis of the time, came to the conclusion that the conditions of life necessitate certain reforms in the dicta of the *Shulhan Aruk*, namely that a number of severities which have no basis in the earlier codes and in the Talmud should be abolished. He decides to put his views into practice, and on a certain occasion opposes the local rabbi who declared a slaughtered cow *terepha* in accordance with the decision of the *Shulhan Aruk*. Samuel argues with the rabbi publicly during the Sabbath morning services and repudiates the authority of that code, claiming that according to the Talmud and earlier codes, the cow should have been pronounced *Kosher*. This statement on the part of Samuel causes numerous difficulties for him. He is declared an *Apikoros* (heretic), and while he is not actually excommunicated, he becomes a suspicious character. Furthermore, his quarrel with the rabbi jeopardizes his incipient romance with Hannah, the rabbi's stepdaughter. The girl does not really love Samuel, but having been brought up in Wilna where she enjoyed the company of enlightened youths, finds life in the small community boring and turns to him, whom she admires, for diversion and companionship. In fact, when she learns later that her former lover, Efros, resides in the same community as a teacher in the government school, her love for him awakens and she makes all efforts to meet him. Samuel, however, is at first not aware of the true nature of Hannah's feelings toward him and he faces a dilemma, whether to continue his championship of religious reforms for the sake of truth or abandon it for the sake of Hannah. The encouragement of a few liberal men in the community as well as the effect of his words upon several men who, though of the old school, are seekers of truth, help him decide in favor of the former course. He delivers a few more public utterances in behalf of necessary reforms, and as a result, his persecution

increases and he loses even his livelihood, for the rich man, at whose house he was engaged as tutor, discharges him.

At this moment, help comes to our hero from an unexpected quarter. The name of Samuel as a champion of reform reaches a group of militant Maskilim in a neighboring large city and they hail him as their leader. Rachel, the sister of Efros the teacher, belongs to that group, and decides to ask the help of our hero in her personal predicament arising from a religious restriction. She was married to a man of her choice who died without issue. According to Jewish law, a brother of the deceased must either marry her (levirate marriage) or free her by the ceremony of *Halizah*. To all intents and purposes, the husband of Rachel had no brothers. But her father-in-law, Todros, an eccentric character and drunkard, blurted out that he had left his first wife whom he had divorced long ago pregnant with child and does not know whether she gave birth to a son or a daughter, nor does he know where to locate her. Rachel thus remained bound, not being able to marry according to the rigidity of the Jewish law. She expects Samuel to extricate her from this precarious condition and for this purpose visits her brother. She makes the acquaintance of our hero, persuades her brother to open a modern private school for Jewish children and engage Samuel as the teacher of the Jewish subjects. The plan is carried out, and since Rachel also teaches in the school, the two meet often and the acquaintance ripens into love. Our hero prepares to fight the battle of Rachel and free her from bondage, but at that time another obstacle appears. In the same community there lives a Yeshibah student who is light-minded, pleasure-loving and hypocritical. He allies himself with both parties, the rigid Orthodox and the enlightened, is both a friend of Samuel and his opponent. He also falls in love with Rachel. The student, making the acquaintance of her father-in-law, learns the story of his life and since his own parentage is unknown, he decides that he is the brother of Rachel's deceased husband, and claims before the court the right to marry her. Samuel then appears before the rabbis as her champion, arguing first that the testimony of Todros the drunkard is invalid, and secondly that levirate marriages ceased to be practiced and that the student, if his words are true, be forced to free Rachel by the ceremony of *Halizah*. There the story ends for the book was never completed.

The characters are well drawn. The personalities of the hero,

Samuel, and of Rachel are especially clearly delineated. The nature of the book requires discussions about the relation of religion to life and these are found in more than the necessary quantity, for they are both lengthy and verbose. Yet they do not mar either the course of events in the book or the psychological analysis of the thoughts and feelings of the characters. Broydes, of course, champions in this novel, as its name indicates, the urgency of adjusting religion to life. Still, this tendency does not affect the artistic quality of the book. The main characters are types, yet their personality is not lost. They appear to us not only as champions of an idea, but also as persons who suffer and strive to happiness in their individual way. We also get a fine glimpse of the general Jewish life in the small community which is reflected through the activities of the minor characters, the rabbi, the *Maggid* (preacher) and their party on the one hand, and the few liberals on the other hand. A very interesting character is Zalman Yentes, a *Shadkan* and business broker who aims to derive personal benefits from the breach between the factions, and appears simultaneously as a friend and enemy of both parties. It is to be regretted that the story was not carried to its end. The only explanation possible is that Broydes whose stories ran close to life was perplexed in finding a suitable ending for the book, for the actual problem was also never solved; it was merely abandoned.

As all the Maskilim of the day, Broydes, though dissatisfied with the old form of ghetto-life, was far from being a reformer of Judaism of the West-European type. He strove, like the rest of them, to maintain traditional Judaism in its integrity, and like Smolenskin, he was greatly disappointed with the results of the pseudo-Haskalah which wrought havoc in Jewish life. He sought a middle way. It is this search for harmony in Jewish life between the old and the new which is expressed in the second long novel *Shetē ha-Kezowot*.

The book possesses great interest as a novel written with a fine artistic skill, though the "tendenz" element is not absent. The plot is simple but intriguing with a considerable comic touch in the situation. The purpose of the author was to illustrate the disadvantages of both extremes in Jewish life, the complete one-sided religious type and the wholly secularized and pleasure-seeking. He draws, therefore, two characters which are contrary to each other and tells of their vicissitudes in life.

The first is Jacob Hēzron, a rich Hassidic young man who hails

from a town in Volhynia where he led the life of a pious Jew and was married to the daughter of the richest Hassid in the community. He is thoroughly saturated with the religious spirit of his environment but possesses a certain peculiarity, that is an aesthetic sense, which is primarily expressed in his love for music. On account of a litigation suit, Hezron goes to Odessa to see his lawyer, Yureff by name. There a new world opens up before him; he is charmed with the beauty of the city and is greatly impressed with the varying life passing before him. Through his lawyer he is introduced into the home of a Jewish aristocratic family by the name of Ahitob. He is dazzled by the beauty of the home, by the way of life led by the higher society, and is especially attracted to the young daughter of the house, Lizza, who appeals to him both by her beauty and by her skill in music. Hezron, intoxicated with the new life, forgets that he is married and that he is the father of two children and falls in love with Lizza. He denies the fact of his marriage, is accepted by Lizza and her father and the betrothal is about to take place. At this juncture, the fact of Hezron's marriage is disclosed through Barzilai, a student of law and former suitor of Lizza, and the proposed betrothal is temporarily given up. The affair, though, is not ended, for the father of Lizza and the lawyer Yureff are greatly interested that the union of the two should take place at all costs, for the tottering fortunes of Ahitob need the support of Hezron's wealth. They propose that he divorce his wife and marry Lizza. At this point, a struggle arises in the heart of our hero, between his love on the one hand, and devotion to his wife and children and his former piety and training on the other hand. He might have succumbed to the former, however, for the lure was too great, if it were not for a new turn of events which evolves the story of the second leading character, Solomon Ahitob, the brother of Lizza.

Solomon who was trained like all Jewish young men of the assimilated type, after having enjoyed life to its fullest capacity, married a girl of his set, Rosalie, a pleasure-loving woman like himself. He goes on a business trip to the small Volhynian town which is the home of Hezron and stops at the home of Hezron's father-in-law where he makes the acquaintance of the entire family including Hezron's wife who is a beautiful woman, but her beauty is marred by the old fashioned way of dressing and the wig she wears. Solomon is greatly impressed by this new type of life revealed before him. He longs for the peaceful and quiet life of

the typical Jewish family. He is charmed by the idyllic picture of the Sabbath as observed in Yeruham's (Hezron's father-in-law) house and is ultimately attracted to Shifra, the unmarried daughter of the house. She appeals to him especially by her modesty, filial love, and integrity of character. He contrasts her with his wife, the light-minded, pleasure-loving, modern woman and finds Shifra greatly superior. He becomes more Jewish in his feelings, studies Hebrew and visits the synagogue. The tangle is thus presented to us; the Hassidic Hezron is charmed by the modern world and forsakes his piety, and is ready to plunge into an illicit love affair, while the secular, light-minded Solomon is charmed by the completeness of Jewish life and falls in love with Shifra, a type contrary to his wife and sister.

The Gordian knot is cut by our author in a strange but masterly way. Hezron's straying from the path of virtue becomes known to his wife. She appeals for help to her grandfather, Judah Emanuel by name. He is the third type who enters the scene and he is supposed to represent the middle way in Jewish life. He is a great Talmudic scholar, an enemy of Hassidim, and a moderate lover of Haskalah. He hears the plea of his granddaughter, ascribes the strange acts of Hezron to his one-sided, narrow Hassidic education and decides to come to Odessa. With his coming, the tangle is straightened out. He dresses his granddaughter in modern clothes and thus her beauty is enhanced and she captivates once more the heart of her renegade husband. It also turns out that the older Ahitob is Emanuel's lost son, and, of course, the father restores his son's tottering fortune, thus removing the main cause for Lizza's pursuance of Hezron. Solomon also overcomes his love for Shifra and she marries a young man of her own city, a former Hassid but now enlightened, who turns out to be the son of a famous physician, a friend of Emanuel.

It is very doubtful whether Broydes' middle way in Jewish life represented by Emanuel could serve as a real solution to the great problem of the adjustment of that life to a new environment. Emanuel is really not a modern Jew, but a finer specimen of the old type who is sympathetic to the Haskalah. But this is of minor importance in our judgment of the novel as a work of art. The plot is intriguing, and we are impressed by the way in which the criticism of the two contrary tendencies in Jewish life at the time is so skilfully carried out. There is, in addition, a fine psychological

analysis of the feelings of the two principal characters during their gradual metamorphosis, and the reaction of the minor characters to the dramas played before their eyes is likewise truthfully depicted. It is also to be noted that our author is one of the few Haskalah writers who saw the bright side of the traditional Jewish life and his portrayal of that phase possesses a distinct charm which arouses both our admiration and love.

A few words should be said about the style of our author. It represents a great step forward in the progress of literary expression. It is terse, clear, and less ornate than that of the other contemporary writers. Of course, it still retains much of the Haskalah style, and the use of parts of Biblical verses is frequent, but the attempt at precise expressions and at a more accurate conveyance of ideas is quite evident. Broydes thus represents both by his artistic skill and his style the highest stage of development to which the realistic Haskalah novel reached.

47. MINOR NOVELISTS

Many were the Hebrew writers who turned their hand during the latter part of the Haskalah period to the writing of novels, but very few displayed skill in this art. Most of the stories were imitations either of works in foreign languages or of the more distinguished novels in Hebrew. There are, however, a few works which deserve to be mentioned, if not for their intrinsic value, then either for the sake of the later and more developed contributions of the same authors or because of their distinction in some other field of literature.

The earliest of such novels is the *ha-Abot ve-ha-Banim* (Fathers and Sons) by Shalom Jacob Abramowitz, the same author who later under the pen-name of *Mendele Moker Seforim* distinguished himself as one of the most gifted short-story writers and novelists of modern Hebrew literature. This novel published in 1868 represents the first literary stage of Abramowitz, the future *Mendele*, master artist of Hebrew belletristics. It is a typical Haskalah novel having for its aim the improvement of Jewish life by means of the spread of enlightenment. Abramowitz was, at the time, saturated with the ideals of the realistic Haskalah, the tendency which under the influence of the Russian positivistic school of publicists and thinkers began to spread among the Maskilim in the sixties

and early seventies of the last century. This tendency emphasized the need of teaching the people positive and real knowledge about nature and life rather than develop their aesthetic sense. In the novel, the author represents the struggle between the fathers of the older generation and the sons of the younger generation striving to obtain knowledge and to live a full modern life. As in all Haskalah novels, the older generation is represented in dark colors, while the younger is idealized, and the story ends in the triumph of the latter, which is also the triumph of justice and righteousness over deceit and hypocrisy.

The story has, as said, a strong realistic note, and the enlightenment preached is of the utilitarian type. It is not, however, of real artistic value, as it is too prominently permeated with the spirit of instruction and preaching. Still we can recognize in some of the passages, especially in the portrayal of phases of Jewish life in the Volhynian communities, the incipient development of a great artistic talent. There is also an attempt on the part of the author, though as yet far from perfect, at a deep insight into the souls of his characters. And just as the content of the novel is in harmony with the spirit and thought of the age, so is the style in accordance with contemporary standards. It is Biblical and rhetorical, and displays few traces of the great mastery in this direction, which the author was to attain within two decades.

The other works of note are the stories of Eleazar Schulman (1837-1903) and Abraham Baer Gottlober. The first distinguished himself by his two important biographies of Heine and Börne and by his researches in the history of Judaeo-German language and literature. His stories are short and are limited to the portrayal of episodes of Jewish life in the smaller towns. His characters are mainly of the type of men whose occupation is not profitable and whose lives and unsuccessful efforts are not only tragic but often comic and ludicrous. The portrayal of the ludicrous in Jewish life occupies an important place in the stories of Schulman.

The second writer was, as we know, a poet and scholar and in his old age he entered the field of fiction. His several stories depict the usual struggle between the enlightened and their opponents. There is little artistic skill in them, but the plots are simple and are not marred by imaginary events, for on the whole, they are taken from life. The ending is always a happy one and the triumph, is as a rule, on the side of the Maskil.

48. KALMAN SCHULMAN

Our survey of the novel of the Haskalah would not be complete without devoting some space to a man who, though not a novelist himself, contributed much towards the popularizing of novels among Hebrew readers, as well as to the spread and cultivation of prose writing in general. That man was Kalman Schulman (1821-1899). He was born in Old-Bychov, a town in White Russia, but in his early youth, he came to Wilna, and there he resided for the rest of his life. He was an intimate friend of the poet, Micah Joseph Lebensohn, who saw in him the successor of M. A. Günzburg (Sec. 35). Schulman really continued Günzburg's work, and for half a century spread useful knowledge both Jewish and secular among the Jews. Unlike other Maskilim, he devoted his energies to champion the cause of enlightenment not by means of criticism but by means of supplying the readers with the necessary information regarding life and nature. Knowing his limitations, he did not attempt to write anything original, but translated or recast works of others.

He was a very prolific writer and the number of his works reaches twenty-odd volumes. To the field of belletristics, he contributed the translation of Eugene Sue's novel, "The Mysteries of Paris," and the *Harisot Beter*, an historical novel from the time of Bar Kokba by Dr. Maier Lehmann, published in the years 1857-1869. The "Mysteries" was one of the first romantic novels which appeared in modern Hebrew literature and its complicated story full of surprises and extraordinary events attracted the readers of the day. It became very popular and together with Mapu's *Ahabat Zion*, it served many a Yeshibah student as the gateway to Haskalah.

His other works fall into two classes, those that deal with Jewish subjects imparting knowledge on Jewish history, biography, geography of Palestine and similar topics, and those that deal with general subjects. To the first belong his *Safa Berura*, a collection of rhetorical essays and sketches, some his own and some elaborated after German models; *Halikot Kedem* (The Ways of the East), in two parts, dealing with the geography of Palestine and Egypt; *Shulamit*, portraits of Oriental Life; and *Ariel*, a collection of historical essays on Sinaitic inscriptions, on the Ten Tribes who live beyond the river Sambatyon, and on Biblical geography. More important are his translations of historical and biographical works.

He translated "The Wars" (*Milhamot ha-Yehudim*), "The Antiquities" (*Kadmoniyot ha-Yehudim*), and the *Vita* (*Toldot Yoseph*) by Josephus. He compiled a series of biographies of Jewish great men from the year 1000 to his own days, called *Toldot Hakmē Yisrael* in four parts, where following the researches of the German-Jewish scholars, he gives the biographies and the estimates of the literary productivity of numerous great men during that long period. In all these works, he was not a mere slavish translator or follower of the works of others but added much of his own.

To the second class belong his *Dibrē Yemē Olam*, the *Mosdē Erez* (The Foundations of the Earth) and the *Mehkeré Erez Rusiah*. The first is a universal history in nine parts elaborated after Weber's *Weltgeschichte*, with added chapters on Jewish history; the second is a complete world geography in ten volumes which contains, besides the physical description of all countries, also information on the nature of the governments, commerce, and culture of the nations of the world.

The library of books written and compiled by one man served as sources of knowledge on all subjects, Jewish and secular, to thousands of people whose only access to literature was the Hebrew language. It is for this reason that Schulman was revered and admired in his generation more than many a writer who surpassed him in originality and talent. His style though rhetorical, for he was considered a leading ornate writer (*Meliz*), possesses a certain charm. On the whole, it was less ornate than that of the other writers of the period, and its pure Biblical diction and the choice of words by the author imparted to it exaltedness and dignity which appealed greatly to the taste of the readers who regarded Hebrew a sacred tongue. Schulman was not a preacher nor a didactic writer, but among his original essays and articles found in the several miscellanies, there are some which carry fine and noble moral teachings. One of such passages is worth quoting. It is called Solomon and the Seraph, and runs as follows:

One day, Solomon, the Prince of Israel, walked in the environs of the Temple. The heavens suddenly opened and a Seraph descended, approached the prince, and pointing to the Temple Court asked, "Solomon, what do you see there?" "A holy man sacrificing an offering to God," answered the royal youth. "And what do you see on the mountain side?" "A peasant woman spinning," rejoined the prince.

"Which of the two is more pleasing to you?" asked the angel. "The holy man," answered Solomon. "You are wrong," said the Seraph. "The peasant woman is the chosen one, for she prepares a garment for the poor." Thus spoke the Seraph and disappeared in flame.

CHAPTER VII

ESSAYS AND CRITICISMS

49. *GENERAL REMARKS*

The sixth and seventh decades of the last century (1860-1880) represent the heyday of the Haskalah movement in Russia and Poland. Consequently, it is the most prolific period of its literature. During these years there were many writers who, influenced by the positivistic and materialistic spirit dominant at the time in literary circles in Russia, injected a similar tendency in Hebrew literature. They began to express themselves in a vigorous and terse manner on subjects which affected most vitally the actual life of the people. To them, Haskalah meant the spread of useful knowledge among the people which would enable them to improve their lives in many ways. They, therefore, advocated reforms in all phases of life, in the occupation of the Jews, in education, in religion, and in literature. Having been, on the whole, better trained than the older Maskilim, for some of them were graduates of the government Rabbinical seminaries, and others, students at universities, these younger writers were dissatisfied with the spirit of the contemporary Hebrew literature, which was, to say the least, semi-theological and exceedingly provincial, and applying to it the canons and standards of European literature, they demanded drastic reforms.

To many of the writers of the older school, whose acquisition of secular knowledge was accomplished in an auto-didactic manner and whose mastery of that knowledge was seldom deep and thorough, any kind of versification was poetry, any tale was considered a novel, and a composition on any subject, an essay. To them the ornate style, the dexterous use of Biblical phrases, and the skilful juggling of words was considered the important quality in writing, while the content was regarded a secondary matter. Even the best among them could not rise above the cult of fine words and ornate phrases. Consequently, exaggerations, empty

phraseology, and verbosity abounded in the so-called literary productions of these writers. Such a state offended the taste of the younger men and they pointed out in their essays and articles these grievous faults with the intention of improving the literary taste and raising the standard of literary productivity. Thus, there arose the first sprouting of literary criticism in modern Hebrew literature. These critics, however, did not limit themselves to demands for changes in the style and content of writing, but insisted also on the introduction of a more scientific tone in Hebrew literature and created a demand for books and articles on scientific and useful subjects of a popular nature. The demand was partly satisfied by men with a thorough knowledge of several branches of science who wrote a number of original books and articles on subjects and also translated many such works from other languages. Likewise, were the demands of the younger writers for the improvement of content and for a closer approach of literature to life partly satisfied by the appearance of essays, long and short ones, which dealt with problems affecting the contemporary life of the Jews. Most of such essays were written by the representatives of the new tendency, but some even by writers of the older school who recognized the justice of these demands.

However, the entry of these champions of better taste and utility in Hebrew literature of the period was not entirely a triumphal one. Their irreverential form of attack upon the older writers, their biting satire and their general attitude of opposition to many of the most cherished values of Judaism—several of these critics were cold utilitarians who made light of the greater part of the older Jewish literature—aroused bitter opposition, and they in turn became the subjects of severe attacks. There were also some older writers who, seeing the trend of the Haskalah movement and fearing its deviation into strange paths antagonistic to Jewish traditions, exerted themselves to initiate a tendency of moderation and compromises between the old and the new in Jewish life, and they turned once more to the older Jewish literary treasures with the intention of revealing the value of the ideas contained therein. They wrote essays, articles, and books containing a defense of religion and Jewish traditions, proving their validity even in an age of enlightenment. As a result of these currents and counter-currents, the number of essays and books dealing with various subjects and problems of life and letters, as well as those aiming to impart

instruction on matters of science, increased greatly and became an important branch of Hebrew literature of the day.

A great factor and probably the most important one, besides the intellectual and spiritual motives stated, was the appearance of Hebrew periodicals in the early sixties of the last century (see Ch. VIII). These periodicals, which were themselves a result of the demand of the time for a closer approach between literature and life, formed the battle-ground on which the writers championed their different views. They also served as a means through which instruction was imparted. It is in these periodicals where most of the essays of the time were printed, where the expression of the different views were voiced and the discussions of the contemporary problems carried on. Some of the more important essays were later collected. It must be admitted, though, that while the quantity of the essays and articles was quite considerable, the quality was not very high. The spirit of the older Haskalah was still dominant, the editors were not very discriminatory, and any composition, if only written in fair style, was considered an article or essay. Consequently, the number of essayists whose writings were later collected into books and who deserve mention in a history of literature is rather small. It is to these that we will now turn our attention.

50. *ELIEZER ZWEIFEL*

One of the essayists of the older school, who exerted considerable influence in his time, was Eliezer Zweifel (1815-1888). He was for a period of twenty years instructor of religion and Talmud in the Rabbinical Seminary at Zhitomir and was thus able to influence the younger generation of the enlightened more by personal contact than by his writings. Zweifel belonged to the moderate Maskilim and was, therefore, averse to both extremes, to rigid Orthodoxy and to the secular type of Haskalah, and endeavored to steer in a middle way. But saturated as he was with Jewish lore and being a man of deep feeling and of an enthusiastic spirit, he was more inclined towards the traditional type of Judaism. Imbued with a deep love for his people and their traditions, inspired by a philosophy of life which saw harmony and ultimate good in the world, and convinced of the beauty and nobility of Jewish ideals, he attempted to impart his views to a generation of enlightened, to some of whom the original sources of Jewish literature were already a partly-closed book. Zweifel was not an

original thinker nor a scientific scholar. He was more of a compiler who ransacked the treasures of Jewish literature in order to draw from them thoughts and ideas which amalgamated easily with his harmonizing view of life and Judaism.

He wrote many essays on various subjects, but the following three books, which are really collections of essays, are his principal works. These are *Sanégor* (The Advocate), *Shalom 'Al Yisrael* (Peace in Israel), and the *Heshbono Shel-Olam* (Examination of the World). The first is a vindication of the Talmud and its teachings. It consists of five parts, each bearing a separate title and dealing with specific subjects. The first is an introduction; the second refutes primarily the arguments of the English divine, McCaul, who viciously attacked the Talmud in his book, *Netivot Olam*, and against whom Isaac Baer Levinsohn wrote his *Zerubabel* (Sec. 34). The third deals with the status of women and their rights according to the Bible and the Talmud; the fourth describes the attitude of the Jews towards non-Jews; and the fifth explains such Talmudic passages which were used by the enemies of Israel through the ages as proof of the animosity of the Jews towards their neighbors. The author displays wide erudition in his defense of the teachings of the Talmud and skilfully points out the high ideals held by the teachers of old, unfolding before the reader the liberal views of peace and love for humanity contained in numerous passages of the Talmud. Though the book is primarily aimed at vindicating the Talmud against the attacks levelled by non-Jews, the author took in consideration also the opposition against it from within which at the time became quite evident both in literature and life. To many of the enlightened circles of Jews at the time, due to external influences, the name Talmud was almost as repugnant as to non-Jews, and a book vindicating its teachings and proving its great value was a timely matter. The value of the book is enhanced by the numerous citations from the works of others with which it is replete. These citations which would make a fair-sized book by itself contain many illuminating thoughts and remarks upon various phases of Talmudic and Rabbinic teachings. The *Sanégor* has not lost its value even today and can still be read with profit by anyone who is willing to brave the unsystematic arrangement and the exuberant verbosity of the author. Lack of system in arrangement as well as frequent digressions from the subject were grievous faults of Zweifel. They were a result of his

training and character. He absorbed much from different sources and in a similar manner presented his thoughts to the readers. The second work, *Shalom 'Al Yisrael*, was a bold attempt to defend Hassidism in a time when it was the target of ridicule both to the orthodox *Mitnagdim* and to all Maskilim. It consists of four parts, three of which aim to mitigate the judgment of Hassidism in general and to effect peace between the Hassidim and *Mitnagdim*. Zweifel is not unaware of the ignorance of the Hassidic masses, and of the opposition of the *Zaddikim* to all secular knowledge and enlightenment, but he believes that the movement as a whole has a sound religious kernel and that the degrading customs and ways of conduct of its followers are only aberrations from the original form intended by the founders, especially from the teachings of the *Besht*. For that matter, even the customs and ways of conduct of the *Mitnagdim* are not above criticism. His main purpose was to vindicate Hassidism from the charges of imposture and the introduction of new-fangled ideas in Judaism. He therefore endeavors to show that its teachings can be traced back to ancient sources. As usual with him, Zweifel quotes in this book copious extracts from Hassidic and many other works which citations make his own arguments disjointed and disconnected. They act, though, as an excellent source of information on many phases of the movement. It must be admitted that our author is not successful in his defense of Hassidism. Yet his book was an important contribution towards the understanding of that movement. He was the first among the Maskilim to understand its good qualities and interpret it as an attempt to revive the emotional phase of Judaism and to intensify the feeling of religiosity at the expense of mechanical performance of precepts, the form of Judaism prevalent in the days of the *Besht*. Zweifel was thus the forerunner of the neo-Hassidic tendency in modern Hebrew literature which made its appearance in a later period.

The third book is a collection of short essays on various phases of life and human conduct and certain manifestations of nature. They are written with a religious intent, to prove the harmony prevailing in the world and the wisdom and justice of the divine economy in nature and life. They further show the uselessness of worry, the advantage of joy in life and contentment with one's lot, the limitation of human knowledge, the need of faith, and the benefits resulting from such a philosophy of life. Extracts and

citations abound in these essays as in the other books, but occasionally we meet with a noble thought of his own. The main quality of these essays, however, is not in the content but in the style. Our author, due to his delving into the treasures of Jewish literature, evolved a rich and attractive style and his manner of persuasion is quite forceful. His essays possess also a certain simplicity and folk-lore quality, inasmuch as they are replete with stories and parables. On the other hand, they lack the force and vigor of reasoning which is manifested in the modern essay.

Zweifel, though master of considerable secular knowledge, was the typical Maskil of the older school and his works are full of exaggerations, excessive verbiage, and his introductions abound with statements of self-praise and other mannerisms which jolt the literary man trained in modern schools. His works, in spite of their usefulness, formed, therefore, the first target for the early critics of the Haskalah.

51. THE CRITICS

i. The first to break the path for the new tendency in literature which demanded a more positive attitude toward life and higher standards in literary productivity was Shalom Jacob Abramowitz. In his book *Mishpat Shalom* (Peaceful Judgment), published in 1860, he attacked severely the ways of the older writers, their addiction to phraseology, their exaggerated self-praise, and in general, their illogical way of reasoning. The object of this attack was, as stated, the works of Eliezer Zweifel, and particularly one of his books, *Minim we-Ugob*, a miscellany containing poems, grammatical and philological notes, explanations of difficult Talmudic passages, and semi-homiletical discourses. The inclusion of such a medley of subjects into one book is sufficient proof for a lack of literary taste. However, it was not this breach of the literary canon which aroused the ire of our critic, but the vaingloriousness of the author, the naïve praise of his own work, and the lack of content in his poems and discourses.

With subtle irony and in humorous vein, Abramowitz first points out the childishness of the declarations on the part of Zweifel in the preface to his book that he is one of the few seekers of truth, that his book is above criticism, and that critics should rather praise it than find fault with it. He further analyzes the poems and shows their lack of ideas, the meaninglessness of certain verses where words

were strung together only to produce rhymes and not to express thought or feeling. He also chastises the author for his contradictions in his discourses, but praises him for his knowledge of Hebrew and keen understanding of the Bible as displayed in the philological and exegetic notes.

This was the first protesting note against the provincialism, childish naïveté, excessive use of phraseology, and lack of literary standards, faults which were prevalent in the Hebrew literature of the day. But in this case, even the critic himself is not above such faults. His criticism is interspersed with lengthy discourses on irrelevant subjects, which interrupt the development of his arguments and impress us that he too wants to display his wide knowledge. However, he was only the first, and was soon followed by others who were more severe in their criticism and more revolutionary in their views and more sweeping in their demands for a complete change in the aims and methods of Hebrew literature.

ii. The *enfant terrible* of this small group of critics was Uri Zebi Kovner (1842-1909). Trained like all other Hebrew writers in the study of Bible and Talmud, he became, after he found the path to Haskalah, so thoroughly secularized and so completely imbued with the positivistic spirit of the Russian literature of the time, that we almost marvel how he ever came to be a Hebrew writer. In fact, his brief participation in Hebrew literary productivity was only an incident in his life, for he soon immersed himself in Russian life and culture, and later even embraced Christianity and died a total stranger to his people. Before that, however, he had some regard for his brethren, and for a short time most sincerely believed in the efficacy of Hebrew literature to reform their lives, provided it be divorced from theology and free itself from the shackles of idealistic views.

These ideas he set forth in several articles which he later collected in a small book entitled *Hēker Dabar* (The Examination of the Case), published in 1866. The appearance of the articles and the book fell like a bombshell into the camp of the Hebrew writers of the day, for Kovner spoke a language never heard before. In unequivocal terms, he condemned the entire trend of the literature of the day, its semi-theological character, the tendency of the writers to cover up the emptiness of thought by meaningless phraseology, their vaunted self-praise, and similar faults.

The *Hēker Dabar* contains two reviews, a general survey of the

state of Hebrew literature of the period, its difficulties and needs, and a scientific article. The reviews deal with a book of poems on the one hand, and a grammatical textbook on the other hand, and though the subjects are so diverse, the critic finds similar faults in both works, namely the unfitness of the authors for the task they had undertaken and their exaggerated self-praise. He is especially severe on the poet and with his biting criticism, he really performed a service for Hebrew literature. Poetry, as we know, was the most abused branch of literature during the Haskalah period. Every youngster thought it his duty to compose at least several poems. Very few of these "poets" ever felt the need to express real thoughts in the compositions and were satisfied with meaningless rhymes. Kovner exposed in his criticism of the work of one of these versifiers, the hollowness of this entire genre of poetry and ridiculed it in a most efficacious manner. But while these reviews were more or less of an individual character, his survey of Hebrew literature from the time of Mendelssohn to his day is a wholesale condemnation of the prevailing tendencies in that literature. He points out first of all the lack of a positive and practical spirit in all its productions. The writers, he says, are all theorists, and their works are either imitations of works in other literatures or actual translations. Because of that, he says, there is excessive productivity in the field of poetry which is of little value, while hardly any attention is paid to problems of life. He especially deplors the paucity of realistic novels and praises Mapu's *Ayit Zabua* because of its exposition of the evils of ghetto life. He minimizes the value of all historical studies, exegetical and philological investigations with which the periodicals of the time filled their columns and speaks lightly of Samuel David Luzzatto who was admired by all. He equally disparages the numerous translations of popular scientific treatises claiming that translators are not sufficiently prepared for their task. On the other hand, he praises the works of Levinsohn (Sec. 34), Reggio (Sec. 25), Erter (Sec. 31), and Slonimski. The first two, he says, helped to disperse the clouds of ignorance among the Jews; Erter ridiculed the evils in Jewish life and caused many people to abandon their ways; while Slonimski is really master of the knowledge he imparts and spreads positive enlightenment. In general, Kovner demands that Hebrew literature divest itself of the religious and idealistic tendencies and

devote itself to the problems of life and to the improvement of the Jewish masses.

The arrogant tone of Kovner, his iconoclasm and especially his personal attacks on many writers, raised a storm of protest from different quarters, and for several years, the periodicals were full of articles against the audacious critic. He tried to reply to his antagonists, but often the editors refused to publish his articles. He, therefore, published in 1868 another book called *Zeror Perahim* (A Bouquet of Flowers) which consists primarily, in addition to a few replies to his critics, of selections of choice passages, "flowers," culled from the issues of the *ha-Meliẓ*, the most important periodical of the time for the year 1866. These passages which were distinguished for the hollowness of their phraseology, inconsistencies, ignorance, and often marred by wilful maliciousness against opponents, served our writer as illustrations for his views. He also found ample space for counter-attacks against his critics which, in spite of his demands for literary dignity, were written in an undignified manner. This book was Kovner's Swan-song in Hebrew literature, as henceforth he disappeared from the scene without leaving any trace. His vehement attacks on the character of the literature of the day, though tinged by a spirit of animosity to much that was best in Judaism, did not pass unheeded. There arose young writers who agreed with many of his views on literature, and, encouraged by his example, endeavored to express similar ideas though in a much milder tone.

iii. Another important critic of the time was Abraham Jacob Papirno (1840-1920). Papirno was a graduate of the Rabbinical Seminary at Wilna and served for a long time as teacher in a government school. He was thus imbued in a degree with the spirit prevailing at the time in Russian cultural and literary circles, and was, like Kovner, seized with a desire to modernize the Hebrew literature of the day, but unlike the former, he was attached to his people and possessed great love for its traditions and culture. His tone is, therefore, mild and his strictures limited to the glaring faults of the writers. He made his debut in literature by several short articles in the *ha-Meliẓ* which were followed by longer articles in the *ha-Carmel*, a Hebrew weekly. These critical essays he later collected in a book published in 1867 under the title *Kanġan Ĥadash Molē Yashan* (A New Jar with Old Contents). The title, in a way, explains the contents of the book which aimed to show that

the literature of the Haskalah differed in content but little from the old types of Jewish literature and that only its forms were new. The work contains three essays. The first is devoted to a stinging criticism of both the unimportant content and the antiquated method of the works of the Hebrew writers. Papirno has no quarrel with historical and other humanistic studies with which the literature of the day was replete, but demands content and form. He is exasperated with the pilpulistic or casuistic method of the scholars, which differs little from that of the Talmudists. He is especially severe against lengthy introductions of books in which the author lavishes praise upon himself and his work, and which often also contain epistles of commendation from others, abounding with exaggerated titles of honor. He lashes also other grievous faults of the authors. The second essay satirizes the excessive euphuism of the prevailing literary style and points out its emptiness, ludicrousness, and meaninglessness. On the other hand, he praises a number of writers whose style is terse and exact. The third deals with poetry, and here he contrasts the poetry of the Bible and of the Golden Age of Spain with much of the poetry of his day, and, like Kovner, shows the futility of mere versification. He demands a higher standard for the writing of poetry, depth of feeling and beauty of expression. Papirno does not minimize the value of poetry and does not apply to it the canon of utility like Kovner, but values real poetic art. He praises many poets of the Haskalah period, among them Wessely, Letteris, Abraham Baer Lebensohn, and especially his son, Micah Joseph, and Judah Leib Gordon.

A year later, Papirno published a book on the drama in general and the Hebrew drama in particular. In this work, he attacked the didactic and allegoric tendency of the Hebrew dramatists, especially the allegoric drama of Abraham Baer Lebensohn, *Emet we-Emunah* (Sec. 37). The attack upon the old poet called forth great resentment, and from all sides writers rushed to his defense. The storm which broke out in literary circles around Papirno caused him to cease his literary endeavors in Hebrew and for a long time he was silent, devoting himself to Russian and Jewish journalism. Only in his old age, he published again several essays and some of his reminiscences in that language. Papirno shows in his criticism keen understanding of literature and dexterous skill in pointing out real faults. In the manner of the day, he demands that literature be close to life, but does not carry the demand to excess.

His style greatly enhances his contribution, for it is terse, concise, clear, and is tinged with humor.

The work of these critics, though not very effective, yet created a stir among the younger generation of would-be writers, and thus gave an impetus to a new literary movement, one which was realistic, militant, and voiced many demands for reforms both in literature and life.

52. *MOSES LEIB LILIENBLUM*

The leading exponent of this movement was Moses Leib Lilienblum (1844-1910). He made his literary debut in 1868, and from that time on, until the day of his death, for a period of forty-two years, he contributed frequently to almost all the important periodicals, and by his literary work as well as by his social activities, influenced greatly the development of both literature and Jewish life. The last thirty years of his life and intellectual endeavor belong, however, to another period. For the present, we are interested in Lilienblum, the champion of enlightenment and the mouthpiece of militant Haskalah.

He was the typical hero of this movement, having passed in his own life all the stages of its struggles and all the phases of its development and his literary character can be explained only through the successive layers of his own experience. Born in Kaidan, a small town in Lithuania to parents of modest circumstances but imbued with deep piety and love of learning, he was given an exclusive Talmudic education. Endowed with exceptional ability, he mastered a great part of the Talmud while yet a child, and in the manner of the day, he was much sought after by parents with young daughters as a son-in-law. At the age of thirteen, he was engaged to a girl of eleven, the daughter of a merchant in Wilkomir. The conditions were, besides a specified sum for a dowry, that he be supported by his father-in-law for several years before the wedding and six years after it. Lilienblum then moved to his intended father-in-law's home. During all the years he was supported, he continued his studies in the Talmud. But slowly he found his way to Haskalah, first by reading the books of the Mediaeval Jewish philosophers and then by making the acquaintance of the most recent books of Levinsohn, Krochmal, and the poetic works of Wessely and the Lebensohns, and gradually his views began to change. This precipitated a twofold struggle, an inner and an external one. Lilien-

blum, as he himself testifies in his autobiography, was of a very conservative nature and changed his opinions only after minute scrutiny of the arguments. He struggled at first against the impending loss of his superstitious beliefs and then against more important ones. His steps in the process of freedom of thought or heresy were slow and painful and are revealed to us in a masterly way in his confessions, *Hatat Ne'urim* (Sin of Youth). He soon passed over from thought to action and began to express himself lightly of certain superstitions, customs, and practices among the Jews and this brought on quarrels between him and his mother-in-law which embittered his young life. But more severe suffering was still to come.

At the age of twenty-one, the free board at his father-in-law's home ended, and the young husband and father had to seek support for his family. Without money—for the promised dowry was not paid—and with no preparation for business, he turned to the only occupation open to him and became a teacher of Talmud, deriving a meager income hardly sufficient for the subsistence of his family. In spite of his work, he continued the process of his enlightenment and began to contribute to Hebrew periodicals and even attempted to spread Haskalah among the youth of the city. Then the real struggle began. The pious leaders of the community declared him an *apikoros* (heretic) and began to persecute him by persuading the parents of his students to take their children away from the influence of the heretical teacher. These persecutions did not deter Lilienblum from continuing his work, but, on the contrary, urged him on to accomplish something for his people and his religion, both of which he loved greatly. He came to the conclusion that Judaism, in order to survive, must accommodate itself to life, and that certain legal reforms are necessary. For this purpose he wrote an article in 1868 in the *ha-Meliẓ* entitled *Orhot ha-Talmud* (The Ways of the Talmud), where he primarily defended the Talmud against the attacks which appeared then both in Russia and in Russian-Jewish periodicals, proving that the Talmudists always endeavored to harmonize religion with life and appealing to the rabbis to repeal some legal severities which hinder the development of Jewish life. This article was written in a mild tone corresponding to his conservative state of mind at the time. A year passed during which Lilienblum himself by continuous study became more radical, and at the end of the year of 1869 published in the same periodical another article

named *Nosofot* (Additions), where he expressed himself more explicitly and demanded a reform of the *Shulhan Aruk*.

These "Additions" created a stir in the Jewish world. The Orthodox condemned him as a reformer, and from all sides rabbis began to attack him. He, of course, found a few defenders, but they helped him little. The results were that he became the object of bitter persecution in his home town. He lost his students, was constantly insulted by urchins in the street who called him heretic, and was subjected to numerous indignities. The pious people even boycotted his father-in-law's business and planned to drive him out of town. At this moment, the enlightened of Kovno interfered and through their influence the police prefect of Wilkomir warned the leaders of the community to desist from harassing him. His position, though, continued to be precarious, for he was without any means of subsistence. Again, his friends in other cities came to his assistance and sent him to Odessa to prepare himself for the study of a profession.

To the inner struggle of opinion within his soul and the sufferings and persecutions he bore from his opponents, there was added another painful experience, and that was an unfortunate love affair. During the years of his championship of Haskalah and reform, Lilienblum made the acquaintance of a certain cultured young lady who admired his courage and sympathized with his work. Acquaintance ripened into love on his part, though she did not encourage him. His love, however, was a hopeless affair, for, in spite of the fact that he did not love his wife, having married her when still a child and divided from her by a spiritual and intellectual gulf, he could not for a moment think of extricating himself from his family. It expressed itself, therefore, merely in Hebrew poems which he sent to his lady love from time to time in which he protested against early marriages and bewailed his suffering.

Torn in mind and spirit, broken-hearted and poor, with the only hope that he is approaching a goal in life as his comfort, this champion of reforms in the Jewish religion came to Odessa, the city of the South, noted for freedom in religion. There a new life was revealed to him and new struggles awaited him. He found himself lonely and lost in this large city; the recommendations which the leading Maskilim gave him availed him little except to obtain several small grants of money, and he soon found himself in need of seeking support for himself and family which he was bound to provide

with some means of subsistence. The evil effects of his education dawned upon him. He found himself utterly helpless. With no knowledge of Russian or any other European language and without any acquaintance with the sciences, he could do nothing else but teach Hebrew. On account of his lack of means, he could not even prepare himself for the university. He frequently changed his occupation in the first ten years of residence in Odessa; he was teacher, editor, book-keeper, but finally he overcame the obstacles and began to prepare himself seriously for the university.

These struggles, however, changed his views. He found himself faced by the great problems of life and his own helplessness made him think of the conditions of Jewish life and the causes of their misery. The indifference to religion which he saw on all sides and his observance of the various phases of ghetto-life, its poverty, the one-sided education of the children, the lack of an economic basis of the great majority of the Jews, the restrictions of the Czarist government, all these convinced him of the utter futility of the demands for reforms in Jewish religious laws. In addition, a change in his inner complex of ideas was going on. The process of heresy was not complete as yet. He became more and more free in his religious views, and from doubting the authority of the *Shulhan Aruk*, he passed over to doubting that of the Talmud, and later even to that of the Bible and dogmas. He thus found himself at last without religion, a fact which pained him greatly. He could not think, therefore, any more of harmony between religion and life since religion shrank in his eyes. There remained only life.

For a time, though, during his first few years of residence in Odessa, Lilienblum still carried on his struggles for reforms, but due to the above-described causes and also to his coming under the influence of the positivistic-materialistic spirit of the current Russian literature with which he became acquainted, the old problems ceased to interest him, and thus the first period of his literary activity closed. From 1874 to 1882, he devoted his energy primarily to questions of reforms in literature and life, and in his many essays written during that time, he sought cures for all the ills of the Jews, and economic and other practical problems form the themes of most of them. Towards the end of the seventies, Lilienblum fell under the influence of the incipient socialistic movement, and like his friends, placed physical labor in the center of life. The echo of this tendency is reflected in his later literary works. We cannot surmise how far

Lilienblum would have gone in his positivistic-materialistic tendency were he not interrupted in the middle of his literary and professional plans. The pogroms of 1882 and the subsequent persecutions which changed much in Jewish life in Russia and put an end to the Haskalah movement, also changed the entire life of our writer. Henceforth, he became the champion of nationalism.

The Haskalah literary activity of Lilienblum thus falls, as we have seen, into two periods, each with a distinct character. The essays of the first period deal with legal and historical subjects primarily, for though their purpose is a timely one, to lighten the burden of religious observance and harmonize it more or less with life, yet the content consists of investigations of the methods of Talmudic interpretation of the Bible, its nature, and character. They resemble closely the literary researches of the Western Jewish scholars, such as Frankel, Graetz and Weiss. Lilienblum did not possess the wide erudition and the necessary secular education of these scholars, but his mastery of the Talmud and a certain critical sense enabled him to shed some light on a number of problems in the development of the Halakah. A number of these essays are both polemic and apologetic, namely those which were written as replies to his critics. These are tinged with a spirit of acrimony, but on the whole, our author employs a dignified tone and shows great respect for his critics, especially those who were famous rabbis in that generation. Only occasionally does he reply vehemently to some rabbis who asked him to desist from his demands for reforms in order not to undermine Rabbinic authority. He then takes the rabbis to task for their failure to interest themselves in the fate of the Jews and for not endeavoring to improve their education and to restrain the leaders of the communities in their oppression of the poor.

The attitude of Lilienblum towards religious reforms underwent, as indicated, several changes. His first article was intended to defend the Talmud rather than to enunciate a demand for reforms, and its spirit is very conservative. The reforms demanded there are slight and are limited to the abrogation of customs introduced by the Kabbala. But in the subsequent essays, his demands became more radical and sweeping. At no time, however, did he demand a reform of the type prevalent in Western Europe. He asked for no changes in the religious services nor insisted upon its beautification. He was primarily a realist and his interest lay in such observances which, when strictly carried out, may hinder the religious man in

his daily life. On the whole, he was conservative in his essays, for even when he himself lost his faith, he still limited his demand for reforms to the province of the practice of the law with no intention of undermining the authority of the Bible or of the Talmud.

This period closes with his autobiography, *Hatat Ne'urim* (The Sin of Youth), or as he calls it "The Great Confession of Zlofod ben Hushim ha-Toe," an assumed name. The title is misleading, for no sins of the author are disclosed here, for the sin is not his alone but belongs to the whole generation of that time. With the exception of several unseemly passages, the book is an interesting record of the struggle of a man who possessed both a fine mind and a feeling heart against circumstances which he was unable to control. It sheds much light upon Jewish life in the small towns in Russia, but unfortunately it emphasizes its darker sides. In this work, the first thirty years of the life of the author are unrolled before us slowly and fully. We see him in his happy days when he was pious and rejoiced in the study of the Talmud, we follow him along on his path of heresy as well as in his struggles against himself, and we finally participate in his grief and despair when he loses his faith altogether and is groping for a way in life. He comes to the conclusion that his youth prepared him for no useful role in society and that Haskalah was only an illusion and an empty shell. Lilienblum expresses in his autobiography his protest against the ghetto-life of his day. The Sin of Youth is, as said, the sin of his parents and of Jewish society in general who gave their children no useful education, did not prepare them for the struggle for existence, married them off young without any attention to their inclinations and thus made them often unhappy. Our author introduces at the end of the book a materialistic note deploring his search for Haskalah which led to nothing practical. It turned out later that Lilienblum was after all useful to his people and that his education and Haskalah were not in vain. But at the time he considered himself unfortunate and wrote his confessions as a warning to other youths not to follow in his path. To the same purpose, namely to disseminate his new ideas of usefulness in life, he also devoted his energies during the second period of literary activity.

The dominant note in Lilienblum's essays of the later period is his insistent demand on a more positive attitude towards the actual necessities of Jewish life, both on the part of the social leaders of

Jewry and on the part of the writers. He calls attention to the poverty of the Jewish masses, to the baselessness of their economic occupation, to the totally impractical form of Jewish education which does not train the youth to become productive members in society, and demands solutions to all these burning problems. He began this period of activity by publishing in 1874 a long article in the *ha-Shahar* entitled *Olam ha-Tohu* (A Confused World). The essay was apparently a detailed criticism of Mapu's *Ayit Zabua* (Sec. 43), but in reality it served as a vehicle for his positivistic-materialistic ideas. In this essay, he condemns severely the entire tendency of the Hebrew literature of the day which is idealistic and impractical. He minimizes the value of historical research to which many of the Hebrew writers devoted so much energy and declares all discussions about the time and place of certain Mediaeval *Paitanim* to be merely a waste of time. He decries the trend of the Haskalah of the period to cultivate among the young the aesthetic sense by producing a mass of poems and ornate writings in Hebrew which have no value in actual life. He asserts that the young generation of so-called "enlightened" are no less impractical and no more fit for life than the students of the Yeshibah trained exclusively on the Talmud. He illustrates his contentions by pointing to the lack of personality and stamina of character in the idolized types of Maskilim depicted by Mapu in his realistic novels and concludes by demanding a complete reform in literature. The writers, according to his view, should preach to their brethren a more material view of life. It is their duty, he asserts, to tell the Jews that the great force in life is labor, and that no labor can be productive without a scientific and realistic conception of things.

The essays written by Lilienblum in his subsequent years are only elaborations of the theses put forth in this particular article. In answer to the query of a certain writer what is Haskalah, he states frankly that it is primarily the acquisition of useful knowledge, such as the study of the natural sciences which will benefit both the student and society, and by no means should we include under that name the writing of poetry and articles which have little content but only an ornate style. He himself dealt in his essays with the problem of Jewish poverty, advocated the establishment of agricultural colonies for the Jews of Russia, the increase of manual labor among the youth of the ghetto, and similar remedies. The exalta-

tion of productive labor as the most important thing in life was an obsession with Lilienblum. It was both an expression of his socialistic proclivities at that time, and a result of his own bitter experiences when he found himself helpless in a large city without any trade or profession except the ability to write Hebrew. He therefore protests vigorously against the overspiritualization of Jewish education which results in raising a generation of teachers, preachers, and petty business brokers of all kinds. In order to inculcate his ideas, he resorted to all devices and even wrote a eulogy of manual labor in the form of a Mishnaic treatise, calling it "The Mishnah of Elisha' ben Abuya," a Tanna of the second generation, who was considered an apostate by his colleagues. Lilienblum thus wanted to show that the apostasy of Elisha' consisted merely in advocating the spread of labor among the Jews instead of excessive study of the Torah.

The essays of this champion of the positivistic-realistic tendency in literature left a great impression on his generation and contributed much toward the raising of the standard of the periodicals of the time. Writers followed the ways of Lilienblum and gradually the meaningless articles and so-called essays began to disappear from the columns of the leading weeklies, and in their stead serious discussions of the problems of the day containing an analysis of the various phases of Jewish life based on facts and study began to be published. Improvement was also noted in the fields of criticism and belles-lettres. An evident effort was made on the part of the writers to really express ideas and thoughts instead of being satisfied with phrasemonging. In general as a result of the new tendency on the part of the younger writers, Hebrew literature emerged from its period of infancy and became a real force in the life of the Jews of Eastern Europe, influencing it and being influenced by it in turn.

Lilienblum also wrote an allegorical poem called *Kahal Refaim* (An Assembly of the Dead) in which he reveals to us the real character of a number of the leading types of Jewish communal life. It is a critical satire on the life of the ghetto as manifested through the activities of these types. A number of the dead, among them a usurer, a rabbi, a president of a Jewish community, a preacher, a teacher, a Hassidic *Zaddik*, and others come to Adam and accuse him of bringing death into the world. He replies to each of his accusers and describes the activities of each in this world revealing

them in their true light. Satire, however, was not the forte of Lilienblum; his strength lay in his publicistic works.

53. POPULAR SCIENTIFIC WORKS

The tendency of the younger writers to introduce in the Haskalah a positivistic note also found expression in the production of a considerable number of popular scientific works. The purpose was to widen the horizon of the readers of Hebrew and impart to them instruction on nature and life.

Among the most important of these popular scientific writers was Hayyim Selig Slonimski (1810-1904), mathematician and astronomer. He wrote the *Mosdē Hokmah* (Foundations of Knowledge), a treatise on the principles of mathematics; the *Toldot ha-Shamayyim*, a manual of astronomy; *Kokba de-Shbit* (Talmudic term for the comet), a work on comets and planets; and the *Yesodē ha-Ibbur* (The Elements of Intercalation), a work on the calendar. His works are distinguished by terseness and exactness of style and simple presentation.

Another writer was Joseph Schoenhack (1812-1871) who composed the *Toldot ha-Areẓ* (The Story of the Earth), the *Toldot ha-Hayyim* (The Story of Life), and the *Toldot ha-Zemahim ve ha-Muẓokim* (The Story of Plants and Minerals). The third was Zebi ha-Cohen Rabinowitz who wrote several works on physics, the most important being the *ha-Menuḥah ve-ha-Tenuah* (Statics and Dynamics).

Shalom Jacob Abramowitz whose literary activity was already noted above also made an important contribution to this literature by his work *Toldot ha-Teba* (The Story of Nature). It is a detailed treatise in three parts on zoology compiled from various authoritative books on the subject by noted German scientists.

The value of these works is greatly enhanced by their style. The attempts of these authors to explain scientific subjects in Hebrew, a language which up to that time was used primarily for expressions of emotions or thoughts of a semi-philosophical nature, required great skill and effort. The lack of terms and the inexactness of Hebrew phraseology formed obstacles which had to be surmounted. The treasures of Hebrew had to be ransacked; the Talmud and Mediaeval literature had to be drawn upon; and new words and terms had to be coined. The result was an enrichment of the He-

brew language which fitted it to become a vehicle of literary expressions of all kinds. The description by Abramowitz of the numerous types of animals, their classifications and gradations are especially noteworthy. The *Toldot ha-Teba* marks the first stage of the development in the mastery of style by this author which came to full fruition in his later works written under the pseudonym *Mendele Moker Seforim*.

CHAPTER VIII

THE PERIODICALS

54. INTRODUCTORY

There is hardly a literature in the world in which the periodicals played such an important role in its development as the modern Hebrew. As it was noted throughout these pages, neither the Haskalah movement nor its consequent result, the modern Hebrew literature, arose in response to a popular demand, but on the contrary, both had to struggle for their acceptance by the large Jewish masses of Eastern Europe. These masses, averse to innovations, looked upon both not only with indifference but with suspicion, and it was only through the untiring efforts of individuals that enlightenment and Hebrew literature finally began to exert considerable influence upon a part of these masses. Under such circumstances, it could not be expected that the literature should strike root in the life of the people by means of the publication of books. There was scarcely any demand for them, and most of the books which appeared during the first Haskalah period and also during a large part of the second were published by the authors themselves. Little could be accomplished in this manner for the development of an extensive literary productivity.

It was different though with periodical publications. First, by offering a variety of subjects to the readers, they appealed to a wider public than the books. Secondly, such periodicals were group undertakings, and the combined efforts helped greatly towards the spread of these publications among larger circles of readers. Thirdly, the frequency of their appearance gradually developed a demand for the new type of literature. Finally, the modicum of news and information on contemporary life which these periodicals contained was a great factor in attracting readers who otherwise had no interest in literature.

It was for these reasons that so many attempts were made by various writers and champions of enlightenment both in Galicia and Russia during the first half of the last century to issue periodical

publications of different types. They can be counted by the hundreds. Most of them, however, were abortive, appearing only once or twice, and many of them can be called periodicals only by courtesy, inasmuch as they were mere collections of essays and poems and had little relation to the time and period in which they appeared. Yet these efforts of the writers and editors were not lost. The layers of the extinct publications prepared the soil wherein better, more vigorous, and more durable periodicals could strike root and sprout.

By the fifties of the last century, the struggle for Haskalah began to bear fruit. More and more people were permeated by its spirit, and the opposition to it began to weaken. These changes widened the horizon of the Jews of the ghetto, and many of them were anxious to be informed of the events of the world, of news regarding their brethren in other lands, as well as to be instructed on nature and life in general. The natural medium for such information and instruction was, of course, Hebrew, as no other language was known to these people, and thus there arose a potential need for a periodical literature. This need began to be satisfied in the late fifties, and soon the appearance of one periodical stimulated the need and increased the demand for more.

These periodicals, both weeklies and monthlies, which appeared fairly regularly during the sixties and seventies of the last century gave a great impetus to the development of modern Hebrew literature. They formed the seminary for many literary talents and enabled them to develop their abilities. Most of the works of the poets and novelists of the period were first published in these periodicals in long installments and only later collected in volumes. They brought literature close to life and they brought about the development of the Hebrew publicistic. It was in their columns that criticism first made its appearance and purged the literature of the day from empty phraseology and unworldliness, thus raising the canons of literary productions. True, all these beneficial effects were not accomplished in a short time, and much of the periodicals of that time certainly cannot be considered from our point of view good literature. With the improvement of the literary taste of the readers, these periodicals themselves improved and became the backbone and the most effective factor both in the development and in the popularization of the Hebrew literature of the period. We shall now turn to a brief description of the characteristics of the leading periodicals and chronicle the efforts of their editors.

55. *THE HA-MAGGID*

The earliest of these periodicals was the *ha-Maggid* (The Purveyor of Information), established by Eliezer Silberman (1829-1888) in 1856 at Lyck, Prussia. Silberman was a pious orthodox Jew, a shoḥet by profession, but he was also a Maskil. He knew some German, and was able to write a fair though incorrect Hebrew, and above all possessed a great measure of energy and a spirit of wordliness. His purpose was to supply his brethren of Russia and Poland—for though the *ha-Maggid* was published in Prussia, it was intended primarily for the Jewish masses in the Russian empire—with news and information of all events transpiring in both the general and the Jewish world in the language they knew best. It was originally an informative weekly, and during the early years when Silberman himself was both the editor and the principal contributor, news and bits of political discussion were the chief staple of the periodical. He allowed, however, some space to articles on timely questions, and more for notes and remarks on historical and exegetic matters to which he devoted a special department entitled *ha-Zofeh* (The Observer). The character of the *ha-Maggid* during the first years of its existence, from a literary and journalistic point of view, was, therefore, far from satisfactory. Silberman, limited in education and narrow in his pietistic views, and being especially anxious not to offend the orthodox Jews, was not the man fit to pilot a weekly in time of clash of opinions. Besides, his own articles, which filled a great part of the journal, were especially distinguished by their tastelessness, lack of content, and empty phraseology. The best writers of the time, therefore, kept aloof from the *ha-Maggid*. Soon, however, there was noted a change for the better.

The cause of the change was David Gordon (1826-1892), who was engaged by Silberman as associate editor. Gordon was a man of wide knowledge, conversant with several European languages, and possessed of literary taste. He, though conservative in religious matters but imbued with a spirit of modernity, slowly introduced important changes in the weekly. He instituted the political review, which was noted for clarity and terseness, established a department for popular scientific and historical articles to which he himself contributed, added a column on bibliography and criticism, and also invited other writers to contribute. Silberman still reserved for himself the writing of the editorials, wherein the policy on Jewish matters was pronounced, and the editing of the *ha-Zofeh*. There were really then two contend-

ing powers in the *ha-Maggid*. The departments of Gordon were permeated with a literary and modern spirit, while those of Silberman remained in their previous state, though somewhat modified through the influence of Gordon. The changes also helped to develop the publicistic part of the journal. Many leading writers began now to participate in it, and numerous correspondents from many cities in Russia began to communicate news and opinions of transpiring events in that great Jewish center. Correspondents from other countries also imparted information on the Jewish activities in those lands, and thus the *ha-Maggid* came to reflect Jewish life to a great extent.

The policy of the periodical on Jewish matters, however, was little changed. Gordon injected into it a certain amount of liberalism, but on the whole, it remained orthodox, though not of the fanatic and zealot type. Silberman considered himself a champion of religion and the weekly became, therefore, the battle-field where the representatives of moderate Orthodoxy defended their position against the more radical Maskilim who demanded reforms and the lightening of the burden of legal severities. From the columns of the *ha-Maggid*, attacks were made against such champions of reform as Lilienblum and his followers. These attacks made by the editor and by a number of rabbis, though comparatively milder than those printed in the *ha-Lebanon* (see below), were not always dignified and evoked sharp replies in the other periodicals of the time.

This policy which endeared the journal to the large masses coupled with the activity of the editor on behalf of the Russian Jews who, in the sixties of the last century, were stricken by famine, raised the prestige of the *ha-Maggid* and increased its influence, especially in Western Europe. The work of Silberman on behalf of his brethren in Russia was indefatigable. He devoted columns to the description of their poverty, issued an appeal for funds, which was responded to generously and established committees for the amelioration of the conditions of the emigrants to the United States. In addition, he opened a department in his weekly for the discussion of the Jewish situation in Russia wherein articles and essays on the economic and social phases of Jewish life were published. All these things made the periodical an important institution in Jewry, increased its influence among the Jews of both Western and Eastern Europe, and also enlarged the number of subscribers. In 1880, Silberman turned over the *ha-Maggid* to David Gordon who henceforth became its sole editor and owner. From that time on, its aspect was changed com-

pletely and it became a thoroughly modern journal. Its columns were opened wide to all writers of various opinions, but its dominant note was the nationalistic, for Gordon became the champion of the new nationalistic movement. An appreciation of his work belongs, therefore, to the next period. In evaluating the services of this weekly for the Haskalah period, we can say that, in spite of its defects, they were great and many. It spread the knowledge of the Hebrew language among large masses of Jews; it developed a desire for literature in circles which otherwise kept aloof from it, and even engendered a desire among a number of rabbis to become writers themselves. Above all, by its very nature as the first regular weekly, it was a factor in creating a Hebrew publicistic where problems of contemporary Jewish life were discussed. It was the first step and was followed by greater strides in that direction by writers in other periodicals.

56. THE HA-CARMEL

The second periodical in chronological order was the *ha-Carmel* established in 1860 by Samuel Joseph Fün̄n (1819-1891). Fün̄n was a scholar of wide erudition and his works on lexicography, Jewish history, and history of literature are of great importance. For a number of years, he was the associate director of the Rabbinical Seminary at Wilna, and later was appointed general supervisor of all Jewish government schools in several provinces. He was thus one of the leading and most influential Maskilim of Wilna. The *ha-Carmel* was established for the purpose of effecting a conciliation between the Orthodox and the enlightened and thus please the government which was at the time promoting the spread of enlightenment among the Jews. Fün̄n being of a conservative trend of mind and a persona grata with the orthodox Jews, was the proper man for the realization of this aim. His co-workers, among them several of the teachers of the same Seminary, were also men of learning and knowledge and were respected by all parties. All these qualities of the editors and contributors augured well for the success of the periodical, yet, the result was far from satisfactory. The program of the editor was an all-embracing one; he promised the readers departments of Jewish scholarship in various fields, poetry, belles-lettres, information on the events of the day, surveys of the various phases of Jewish life, and of criticism. Of this wide program little was carried out, and the little that was given was written in a barbaric

ornate style replete with meaningless phraseology. Fün̄n had no journalistic sense, nor did he possess the technical knowledge necessary for the publication of a journal. During its first years, the *ha-Carmel* hardly reflected the spirit of the times, and the publicistic articles published there were of little value. The conciliatory nature of the editor, his desire to please all sides and his submissiveness to the wishes of the government coupled with the constant fear of the censor contributed greatly towards the characterlessness of the weekly. Only one department of the *ha-Carmel* rose to a certain height, that of the studies in Jewish history and literature. Due to Fün̄n's high scholarly standing, he succeeded in obtaining the cooperation of the leading Jewish scholars of the day. As a result of all these defects, the weekly made little progress. The circulation diminished and the leading writers, such as Gordon and others ceased to participate in it. Fün̄n finally resolved to improve his weekly and from its sixth year on, changes were introduced in it. The spirit became more liberal and the editor allowed the writers to express their opinions freely. This, of course, attracted again the more liberal writers, such as Gordon, Lilienblum, and their like, and they began to contribute more to its columns. The *ha-Carmel* then became a vehicle for the militant Haskalah, and even Fün̄n himself took a vigorous stand against the extreme Orthodox. Simultaneously with the rise of the standard of the publicistic articles, there appeared in the weekly also critical essays by the younger critics, Kovner, Papirno and others.

These improvements, though, did not alter the material situation of the periodical. For several years, it struggled for its existence appearing irregularly, and finally, when the editor could not continue the struggle any longer, it ceased to be published early in 1871. For some time, however, it continued as a monthly. The service of the *ha-Carmel* to Jewish life of the day was slight, as its influence was small; its contribution consisted mainly in aiding the development of Hebrew literature, as in it were published many of the works of the leading writers of the Haskalah. It also developed to a great extent literary criticism of the better type, and in its last years, it served as a school for the younger publicists; last but not least, it published many leading articles of permanent value.

57. THE HA-MELIẒ

The third and in reality the most important periodical of the time, the *ha-Meliẓ* (literally the Advocate, but used by the editor in

the sense of the Mediator), was established in 1860 at Odessa by Alexander Zederbaum (1816-1893). The *ha-Meliz* which existed for almost half a century, appeared as a weekly up to 1882, then for a number of years as a semi-weekly and ultimately as a daily. It is the first twenty years during which it appeared as a weekly which interest us primarily, as it is during that time that the periodical served as the most effective vehicle for the ideas of the Haskalah.

The editor and publisher, Zederbaum, was a man of limited education both in Jewish and secular studies with a superficial knowledge of several European languages and a fair knowledge of Hebrew, which enabled him to write in a flowing manner though his diction was faulty and his style barbaric. He possessed, however, a great amount of energy and a journalistic and practical sense, qualities which helped him greatly in the fulfillment of his task.

In 1840, he came to Odessa, and for a number of years engaged in business. Being by nature inclined to social activity, he participated in the work of spreading enlightenment among the Jews of the community which was then a center of Haskalah, and thus came in contact with Pirogov, the superintendent of education in Odessa. Pirogov, who was a friend of the Jews and was really interested in the promotion of culture among them, advised Zederbaum to publish a Hebrew weekly. Zederbaum associated with him his son-in-law, Dr. Goldenblum, the director of the Jewish school in that city. The *ha-Meliz* thus came into being.

The first number of the *ha-Meliz* bore the motto, "A mediator between the government and the people, between faith and enlightenment." This explains the purpose of the new weekly which was to bring the Jewish masses nearer to Haskalah and thus realize the wishes of the government in the promotion of education and secular culture among the Jews. This attitude stamped the character of the weekly during its first years; publicistic became its principal department and news and information were a secondary matter. Zederbaum, who considered himself an expert in all Jewish matters, initiated in Hebrew journalism the editorial or the leading article which usually dealt with a timely question. He possessed, as said, a journalistic sense and an ability to feel the pulse of life. His articles always contained some practical element and expressed some logical opinion. He did not neglect, however, entirely the other departments and invited writers and correspondents to contribute to the weekly, and

was anxious to obtain the assistance of the better type of contributors.

The practicality of Zederbaum caused him to change his policy. Instead of speaking of the Haskalah in general as many writers had done, he began to deal with specific problems, such as improvement of education, changes in the conduct of Jewish communities, the analysis of the legal status of the Jews in Russia, and the defense of his brethren against attacks in the general press. These various interests swerved him from the path of conciliation which was indicated in the motto, and he became a champion both for improvements in Jewish life and the betterment of the legal and the social position of the Jews. This forwardness found favor both with the readers and writers. The latter began to express their views more freely and publicistic of the *ha-Meliẓ* assumed a vigorous tone. The vigorousness was stimulated by the attitude of Zederbaum. He was very tolerant and printed the articles and essays of the contributors even if they opposed his own opinions. But he had a habit to add to them long notes and remarks, often longer than the articles, where he expressed his own views on the matter or refuted those of the writers. As the editor was not very particular in his style and diction, these notes frequently contained insults, open or covert, to the writers. The contributors did not remain silent and answered the editor in new articles, and thus a polemic which frequently lasted for some time arose. These features in a way minimized the informative and instructive functions of the weekly, but furthered the development of literature and publicistic in particular. Zederbaum tried also to devote some space to correspondence on Jewish life both in Russia and abroad and to some scientific articles, and for a time Slonimski conducted a special department in the *ha-Meliẓ* imparting knowledge on nature and life. However, the center of gravity in the weekly was the publicistic. The periodical was published in Odessa for ten years, and during this time, it served both as a tribune for the expression of opinion on the part of a younger generation of writers and as a seminary for the literary development of these writers, and this constitutes its greatest service to modern Hebrew literature. The questions which formed the center of contention and which turned the publication into a battle-field for almost eight years were that of literary criticism and religious reforms, the tendencies of which were described in the preceding chapter.

The demand for higher standards in literature was, as we have

seen above, first voiced by S. J. Abramowitz in his booklet, *Mishpat Shalom* published in 1860, and this started the literary polemic. A writer in the *ha-Meliẓ* defended Zweifel, whose work was the object of Abramowitz's severe criticism. This in turn evoked the reply of the poet Gottlober, who came to the assistance of his friend Abramowitz. The reply did not remain unanswered, for a student of the Rabbinical Seminary at Wilna, Abraham Elijah Harkavy, who later became one of the leading Jewish scholars, attacked Abramowitz for the criticism, and the latter defended himself in a series of articles. This clash of opinions lasted for many years and brought out new literary talents. For a time Abramowitz held the center of the field in the weekly as the champion of higher standards in literary production, and then Kovner and Papirno appeared on the scene. The first of the two, as indicated above, created a storm in the rows of the Hebrew writers by his wholesale condemnation of the general trend of the literature of the day and by his crass materialism. He became the center of attack by most of the older writers, but was also defended by some of the younger ones. Papirno was moderate in condemnation and milder in tone, but nevertheless insistent in his demands for higher canons in literary production. The result of this polemic and clash of opinion expressed primarily in the columns of the *ha-Meliẓ* was an advance in the literature of the day.

The second question, the demand for the improvement of Jewish life and for some religious reforms also found its expression in the columns of that periodical. It was here that Lilienblum repeatedly appealed to the rabbis to heed the voice of life and alleviate the burden of legal severities in the observance of the Jewish religion. He was followed by Gordon and others. Zederbaum did not close his weekly to the opinions of the other side, and printed replies from the conservatives, among them articles by several rabbis, but kept out undignified attacks of the type which flourished in the *ha-Maggid* and in the *ha-Lebanon* (see below). The wide discussion of these problems which occupied for several years the most important place in the columns of the *ha-Meliẓ* also served a useful purpose, as it helped both to clarify the conditions of Jewish life and to further development of Hebrew publicistic, and like the first, it brought forth new writers in the field.

In 1871 Zederbaum moved the periodical to St. Petersburg, the capital of Russia, and with the change of place there entered a change in the character of the weekly. The polemic about reform ceased

and instead space was devoted to the insistent problems of the material aspect of Jewish life. As was indicated several times, the economic condition of the Jews in the Pale of Settlement became in the late sixties very precarious, and the writers who responded to the demand of the critics that they busy themselves with problems of real life, began to search for solutions. The editor, with his practical and journalistic sense, felt the pulse of Jewish life and reacted to the demands of the moment, making suggestions for the improvement of the Jewish position in its several phases. One of the burning problems of the day was the question of reforms in Jewish education. The need for such reforms, especially of widening the scope of the school to include elementary secular studies began to be felt even among some rabbis.

All his endeavors though did not help Zederbaum to establish his weekly on a sound financial basis, and he was forced to suspend publication in 1873 and it was not renewed for five years until 1878. After its reappearance, the *ha-Meliz* was again improved. It assumed the form of a European journal. The department of information on Jewish life in Russia and abroad was enlarged, a political review was instituted, and in addition, a special section for apologetics was established. In those days anti-semitism began to rise in Russia and the Russian newspaper made frequent attacks upon Jews and Judaism. The periodical answered these attacks, and some of these replies were reprinted in the journals of the capital. The *ha-Meliz* was also instrumental in vindicating a number of Jews in Kutais, Caucasus, charged with using Christian blood for religious purposes and thus saved the Jewish honor. The problems discussed most were the establishing of agricultural colonies in order to relieve Jewish poverty and the combating of anti-Semitism.

Towards the end of the year 1878, the poet Judah Leib Gordon, became associate editor of the weekly. His cooperation helped to improve the style of the articles and to develop the feuilleton, a literary composition corresponding to the humorous column of the American newspaper. Zederbaum was still the moving spirit and the prime factor in making the periodical respond to the demands of life. With the outbreak of the pogroms and the rise of the nationalistic movement, the *ha-Meliz* became the organ of the movement. To trace the activity of this important periodical further would carry us beyond our limits.

Considering all what was said about the nature of the weekly and

the activity of its editor, we can say that it exerted, during the *Has-kalah* period, great influence upon Jewish life and gave impetus both to the development of Hebrew literature and to its rise to a higher standing.

58. *THE HA-LEBANON*

The *ha-Lebanon*, the fourth of the periodicals of the time, was founded by Yehiel Brill in 1863 in Jerusalem. It existed for twenty years, first as a monthly, and later as a weekly. Brill was trained in the Yeshivot of Jerusalem, and was, therefore, saturated with the spirit of extreme Orthodoxy, but he was able to write the ornate Hebrew of the time and also obtained some modicum of secular knowledge. For some time he made extensive journeys through Egypt and Turkey and also visited the capitals of Europe. During these travels, he observed that there was a great desire on the part of the Jews of Europe to obtain some information about the life of the Jews in Asiatic countries in general and in Palestine in particular. Likewise were the Jews in the far corners of the world anxious to hear news about their dispersed brethren throughout the world. He therefore decided to return to Jerusalem and to supply this demand. He married the daughter of the well-known traveler, Jacob Ibn-Sapir (Sec. 90), established a small printing-shop and began to publish the *ha-Lebanon*.

The program of the periodical was primarily informative, but in order to appeal to the rabbis, the editor established a department for the discussion of Talmudic and Rabbinic subjects, entitled *Kabod ha-Lebanon* (The Glory of the Lebanon). For the first few years, Brill followed his program closely, filling the columns of his periodical with news about Jerusalem and its institutions, with correspondence from important centers in Asiatic countries, and also with some items of interest about the Jews in Europe. Ibn-Sapir came to his assistance and published long articles about his journeys in distant lands. The publicistic was limited to criticism of the institutions in Jerusalem. Soon, however, Brill clashed with the leaders of these institutions and was forced to cease the publication of the *ha-Lebanon* and leave Palestine. He came to Paris and after some struggle succeeded in renewing the publication in that city in 1866.

The program of the *ha-Lebanon* broadened with the change of place. The information was no more concentrated on Palestine and the Orient, but more space was devoted to the life of the Jews in

European countries and ultimately even a kind of political review was added. Publicistic articles became more frequent and poems and stories made their appearance. On account of its publication in Paris, the seat of the *Alliance Israelite Universelle*, the *ha-Lebanon* began to exert some influence upon Jewish life, and its energetic editor became conscious of his own importance, especially from the time the periodical was issued as a semi-monthly (1868).

From that time on it was the organ of the extreme Orthodox party, and Brill, prompted by the desire to pass as the champion of tradition, devoted the columns of his publication to the war against the current of radical Haskalah which made its appearance at that time. It became the battle-field of the rabbis who for two years attacked vigorously the writers who demanded religious reforms and other changes in Jewish life. The tone of these polemic articles was at first so rabid that it provoked the anger of some of the more moderate orthodox rabbis of Russia, who protested to Brill and advised him to carry on the war with the liberals in a milder manner. The editor heeded the advice but did not change the belligerent character of his organ. For a period of ten years, the *ha-Lebanon* was the bulwark of the Orthodox, and polemics against the new tendencies in Jewish life and literature was its main literary pabulum.

During the Franco-German war, Brill as an alien was sent out from Paris, and he went to Mayence where he renewed the publication. Its tone, though, as said, was not changed as it continued to be polemic. Most of its contributors were rabbis who seized the opportunity to display both their zeal for religion and their ability to write Hebrew, but a number of the more conservative Hebrew writers also contributed to it. Especially distinguished among them was Yehiel Mikal Pines, a man of great literary ability and deep thought.

With the outbreak of the pogroms in Russia and the rise of the nationalistic movement, the periodical changed its tone. It ceased to be polemical and its columns were henceforth devoted to the *Hobebē Zion* movement. The times, however, were no more suited for the appearance of such an organ, and after continuing its new policy for a little over a year, it ceased its publication in 1881.

The service of the *ha-Lebanon* to Jewish life and literature was slight. It contributed little to either. Its only merit was that with all its narrowness of view, it widened the horizon of the orthodox Jews and forced many of the rabbis to interest themselves in problems of Jewish life, and thus ultimately participate in their solution. It

also aroused interest and love for the Hebrew language and certain phases of its literature in such circles where several decades before even the study of Hebrew grammar was considered heretical.

59. THE HA-ZEFIRAH

The *ha-Zefirah* (The Dawn) was first established by Ḥayyim Zelig Slonimski in 1862 at Warsaw but was of short duration, as only twenty-five numbers appeared at the time. Its publication was renewed twelve years later in Berlin where it was issued for a year and then removed again to Warsaw. In the latter city, it continued to appear for over forty years, for a time as a weekly and then as a daily. During its first appearance it exerted little influence on life, as it was primarily devoted to the popularization of scientific knowledge among the Jews, and its columns were filled with articles on various natural sciences. Even after its reorganization, when it assumed the form of a periodical, its editor, Slonimski, who was more of a scientist than a journalist, devoted more space in his weekly to instructive matter than to publicistic. As a result, the *ha-Zefirah* occupied during the seventies of the last century a secondary place in its influence upon life and literature. Its period of glory began in the eighties when that remarkable fertile writer and keen journalist and publicist, Naḥum Sokolow, became its associate editor. This stage of the *ha-Zefirah* belongs, however, to a later period.

60. THE HA-SHAḤAR

The *ha-Shaḥar* of Smolenskin, which appeared as a monthly with occasional interruptions for twelve years, was by far the most important of the periodicals of the time. Its contribution to the development of Hebrew literature was great, and it exerted considerable influence upon life. The vigor and alertness of the editor are well-known to us, and his spirit was reflected in every issue of this monthly. The program of the *ha-Shaḥar* was an all-embracing one. It included all that could be demanded of a literary and scholarly journal of the day. It gave surveys of Jewish life in various countries; it developed the departments of poetry and belles-lettres; it instructed the readers in Jewish history and literature by printing long articles on these subjects, and even satisfied the more scholarly among them by devoting space to exegetic notes and remarks on the Bible and the Talmud.

The literary value of the contributions in that monthly was high in

accordance with the standards of the time. The personality and energy of the editor attracted the best writers of the period. To participate in the *ha-Shaḥar* was considered a badge of honor. In addition, Smolenskin with his keen literary sense was able to recognize ability in young writers and he helped them develop it. It was he who brought forth the humorous short-story writer, Brandstädter; it was he who encouraged Solomon Rubin to produce his numerous works on the history of culture; and many other writers who later acquired name and fame made their debut in the *ha-Shaḥar*.

The current of the militant Haskalah prevalent at the time found its way also into that monthly, but there it was modified and assumed a different tone. There it was expressed not so much in direct attacks upon legal severities but in polemic poems, humorous stories, and historical works. Gordon published many of his polemic poems in its columns; Brandstädter satirized Hassidic life in his short stories; and Rubin uncovered the non-Jewish origins of many popular beliefs and religious customs. Of great value and influence were the numerous long publicistic articles by Smolenskin himself. In them he developed a view of Jewish history and Judaism which brought about a revaluation of the ideals of the Haskalah and gave an impetus to the rise of the nationalistic idea in Jewish life.

Probably the greatest service of the *ha-Shaḥar* to Hebrew literature was the custom of the editor to publish in the periodical in numerous installments and often with separate pagination complete books dealing with historical and literary subjects in a comprehensive manner. It was in this manner, that Rubin's many works, David Kahana's monographs on the history of the Kabbalistic, Messianic, and Hassidic movements and Eleazer Schulman's two excellent biographies of Heine and Börne came into being.

61. OTHER PERIODICALS

The seventies of the last century were prolific years for periodicals. Probably the prestige gained by the editors of existing weeklies or monthlies stimulated other writers to imitate their example. Most of these, however, were abortive and of short duration. Of the more noted are the *ha-Boker Or*, a monthly edited by Gottlober, with frequent interruptions, for six or seven years, namely from 1876-1879 and then from 1880-1881 and 1885-1886; the weekly *ha-Kol* (The Voice) edited by Rodkinson (1876-1879) at Königsberg; and the monthly *ha-Emet* of Lieberman which appeared only in two issues.

The first periodical was of a high literary standard, though it never attained that of the *ha-Shahar* which its editor aimed to emulate. The second reflected the radical and militant tendency of the *Has-kalah*, while the third was the first attempt to propagate socialistic ideas in the Hebrew language.

Book V

**JEWISH LEARNING AND THOUGHT IN THE NINE-
TEENTH CENTURY**

CHAPTER IX

MOVEMENTS IN JUDAISM

62. *THE REFORM MOVEMENT*

The general survey of the spirit of the time given above (Secs. 27, 28), makes it unnecessary for us to dwell much on the external causes which called forth the Reform movement in Judaism, nor to explain once more the intentions of its initiators. We shall, therefore, limit ourselves to the elucidation of the inner character of this tendency and to the description in greater detail of its theories and views.

It must, however, be emphasized at the outset that while the movement was undoubtedly influenced by external conditions, namely by the passionate desire for emancipation and by the motive to harmonize Judaism with the conditions of general life, there were other and deeper motives at work. This movement differs considerably from other attempts at reform both in Judaism and Christianity, such as the Karaite schism in the former, and the Protestant Reformation in the latter. Both of these aimed at a restoration of the more ancient forms of the religions and a return to the older and simpler interpretation of the respective fundamental documents, the sources of religious beliefs and practices. In no wise did the promoters of the movements intend to change the character of the religions, and reconstruct their nature and essence. In the Jewish Reform movement of the 19th century, this very aim was greatly in evidence, at least as far as the views of its most representative leaders are concerned. That there were many shades of opinion in the camp of the reformers, and that many leaders adopted a middle way, goes without saying.

The expression of this view, however, marks the advanced stage of the movement. Its earlier steps were much less radical and were concerned primarily with external changes in the ritual of the synagogue. The first step in that direction was made by Israel Jacobson who established a temple in Seesen, Cassel, in 1810, where he inaugurated a modern form of worship. The innovations consisted in preaching sermons in German, reciting additional prayers in that

language besides the standard Hebrew ones and the playing of the organ, as well as the introduction of the ceremony of confirmation for both boys and girls. This attempt at reform was of short duration, for the political changes resulting from the defeat of Napoleon forced Jacobson to move to Berlin and cease his activities. A few years later, though, he made, together with a group of enlightened Jews of Berlin, a second attempt at reforms in the synagogue service. Two private temples, one in the home of Jacobson, and the other in that of Jacob Herz-Beer, were established in which the services were conducted along the lines laid down by the founder. This attempt too proved abortive, for the government interfered and closed these temples. It is to be noted that while the leaders and the preachers did not subscribe to the orthodox beliefs, they did not attempt to alter the prayers in consonance with their views.

A more definite step in the direction of reform was made in 1818 at Hamburg when a group of liberal Jews through the influence of Eduard Kley, a former preacher at the private temple services in Berlin, established their own temple. Not only were the earlier innovations, including the playing of the organ, introduced in this new house of worship, but distinct changes were made in the traditional liturgy which pointed to a definite tendency to depart from Rabbinic and Orthodox Judaism both in practice and in belief. These changes were incorporated in the new Prayer Book issued by the congregation in 1819 under the editorship of I. I. Frankel and M. J. Bresselau.

The changes consisted first of all in abbreviating the Hebrew service by omitting some prayers which the compilers deemed unimportant; second, in modifying some of the prayers for the coming of the Messiah so as to read that not a personal Messiah is expected, but the institution of a Messianic era in the world; third, in the omission and modification of some prayers wherein the hope of the gathering of all Jews in Palestine is expressed. The first of these changes indicated both an attempt at a departure from the practice of traditional Judaism and an expression of opinion that the accepted Rabbinic law is not entirely binding, at least in some of its details. The other two, however, went deeper and betrayed a desire, if not to abolish at least to modify an important dogma in Judaism, namely, the coming of a personal Messiah and the restoration of the Jewish kingdom in Palestine.

This incipient rift with tradition was not wide enough. Not only

were many prayers for the restoration of Zion left intact and no attempt was made to change any other dogmas embodied in the prayers, but the innovators even asserted that these changes do not imply any departure, as they can be justified on Rabbinic authority. In fact, they endeavored to prove the legality of such reforms by citing opinions from liberal orthodox rabbis who asserted that these changes are permitted according to the Talmud and authoritative codifiers.

However, whether the leaders of the Hamburg Temple actually believed in their own contention or that they merely made such statements in order to pacify their opponents, the issue of the new prayer book created a stir in German Jewry, the echoes of which reverberated also in the Jewries of the adjoining countries. The Orthodox saw or sensed intuitively in this event the beginning of a movement which was destined to change the aspect of Judaism, and they endeavored to stem it. Their endeavors, though, were limited primarily to denunciations and vehement condemnation of the innovations. These ardent champions of tradition totally ignored the fact that a distinct change had entered in Jewish life which demanded some concessions in religious practice, and that there was a new spirit abroad which required modernization of Judaism in some of its aspects. To them any deviation from the ways of religious life as lived in the ghetto for centuries was heresy. The consequences of such an attitude was the injection of a bitter polemic tone in the controversy which had arisen around the new prayer book. The bitterness on one side aroused, of course, a similar feeling on the other side and helped to widen the rift. The champions of the new movement, which kept on spreading, began to evince an increasing spirit of revolt against the Law, or better still, against the entire practical aspect of Judaism which is expressed in a complicated set of legal institutions, precepts, and commandments. It must be understood, though, that the controversial element was only a minor factor in that revolt. The real cause was the change in the religious opinions of the younger generation of rabbis who came to leadership in many German communities. The change in turn was due partly to intellectual reasons, and to a great extent to social and political conditions. The younger rabbis, trained in the universities and conversant with the philosophical, historical, and archaeological ideas of the age, could not honestly accept some of the beliefs and traditions nor impute authority to the entire complex of Jewish law. But instead of retiring from the ministry and search for other fields of occupation, they chose rather to

remodel and reconstruct Judaism so as to harmonize it with their own views.

Still stronger was the influence of the social and political factors. The great passion which dominated Jewish society at the time was the desire for emancipation. To be like their neighbors, to become members of the general society, to enjoy the rights of citizens, and to share unhampered in all social and political activities, was the fervent wish of almost every Jew, especially of the younger generation. In their eagerness to reach their coveted aim, they endeavored to remove all barriers which they thought stood between them and their reception as equal members of the general society and their admission to share in that life and activity. The special Jewish laws and observances were considered a barrier by them, as great as the laws of the governments which discriminated against them. In their minds, it put upon them the stamp of a separate people, of a particular group which differed in its ways and manners from their neighbors, the Germans. Moreover, this idea was constantly impressed upon them from without. The pamphleteers and writers of treatises against the Jewish emancipation continually reiterated the argument that the Jews do not desire equal rights, for they are a separate nation living according to a different code of laws, and that they consider themselves as such by their feeling of unity with their brethren in other countries. Small wonder then, that there arose a desire on the part of many Jews to minimize the differences between their life and that of their neighbors as much as possible; hence the revolt against the complex legal structure of Judaism. The younger rabbis became the exponents of that revolt.

There is, however, a third factor which should not be overlooked, and that is the earnestness and the good intentions of many of the champions of reform to preserve Judaism from total disintegration. The times were turbulent, many of the younger generation became impatient in their expectation of emancipation, and apostasy was rampant in German Jewry. The old type of Judaism became a burden to them, and since they had ceased to observe the laws long ago, it mattered little to them whether they remain Jews in name and bear all the suffering which the profession of Judaism entailed or become non-believing Christians and enjoy the privileges which such a change conferred. Consequently, the number of converts among the Jews of Germany increased enormously in the twenties of the last century. The idea then arose in the minds of some spiritual leaders to stem the

tide of apostasy by lightening the burden of Judaism, namely divesting it of its legal and national elements and preaching only the ethical and noble religious ideals which it contains, buttressing these by a few beautiful ceremonies which appeal to the emotions. They thus hoped to awaken in the hearts of the indifferent a religious spirit and a new loyalty to the heritage of their fathers. We may look upon such beliefs and hopes as naive and simple, but we must not deny to their adherents earnestness and sincere endeavor in their grappling with a serious situation to save from extinction what they thought the most important part of Judaism.

As a result of all these factors, there arose the revolt against the law which expressed itself in a general desire to minimize as much as possible the observance of the laws and precepts which contributed to the particularization and distinctness of Jewish life, and to deny them binding authority. But while the revolt was general among all leaders of the Reform movement, there was great difference and variance in the degree of that revolt. The leading spirits of that movement during the second stage were all raised in pious orthodox homes, and many of them were also trained in the Yeshivot of the old type and had imbibed for years the love for the Talmud and Rabbinics. It was, therefore, not easy for them to liberate themselves from the influence of obedience to the law which was ingrained in them during the most impressionable part of their lives. Only few succeeded in such auto-emancipation. It is for this reason that we see such variance and difference of opinion at the several Rabbinical conferences the aims of which were to give the movement a definite aspect and crystallize it in a unified form of thought and single policy of practice. Some there were amongst the leaders who revolted merely against the *Shulhan Aruk* and its late Rabbinic accretions. They advocated a return to the Talmud and its principles of legal interpretation. Others denied even the dominant authority of the Talmud and allowed themselves a latitude of selection as to which Talmudic laws and interpretations they should consider binding and valid. They stopped, however, at the Bible as they considered its authority binding. There were still others who went further and denied at least partial authority to the Bible, making a distinction between its various groups of laws, considering some binding and some not.

Similarly, there was variance of opinion in regard to belief in dogmas, though, in a smaller degree. Some wanted to retain more of the accepted dogmas and some advocated the rejection of all of

them except the most universal which are of eternal validity. There seemed to have been unanimity only on one point, and that was the discarding of the national element in Judaism, whether expressed in laws and customs or in articles of belief. But how far the process of purging Judaism from its distinct national character should go, on this no agreement was reached.

On account of these differences and shades in the movement, it is difficult to give an accurate statement of its ideology in all its phases. The nearest we can approach to an accurate survey of its theories is by presenting the views of its most representative leaders, though they belong to the radical wing, namely those of Abraham Geiger and Samuel Holdheim. The two were outstanding personalities in the entire movement who influenced the strivings of the group to a great extent. Their views, therefore, reflect the spirit of the tendency in its general outlines, for though they were not accepted in entirety by their colleagues, they became ultimately the basis for thought and action of a number of Reform groups, both in Germany and in other countries, especially in the United States.

63. ABRAHAM GEIGER

Abraham Geiger (1810-1874), the moving spirit of the Reform movement in Germany, was born in Frankfort on the Main, and like all children of the ghetto, was introduced early in life to the study of the Talmud in which he made great progress. Some concessions, however, had to be made to the demands of the time, and young Geiger was, therefore, taught by his older brothers the rudiments of mathematics and the elements of the German language. Once initiated in secular studies, he pursued them himself and later with the help of teachers who were engaged for him by one of the members of the Rothschild family. In a short time, he was ready to enter the university and was faced with the problem of the choice of a career. His family destined him for the ministry and he himself was at first inclined towards that profession, but, due to the fact that he was at the age of eleven assailed by doubts as to the veracity of the religious tradition in which he was reared, he hesitated to devote himself to spiritual leadership and decided to take up the study of Oriental philology. Accordingly, he entered in 1829 the Heidelberg University, where he pursued for one year the classical and Oriental studies. He continued his studies privately in Hebrew, Aramaic, and Talmud, and even began to compose a Hebrew commentary on the Mishnah

which was intended to explain the text independently of the Gemarah. The following year he attended the university at Bonn. At that time, he decided definitely, partly through the insistence of the family and partly through the influence of several fellow students who were preparing for the Rabbinate, on the ministry as his future profession. He utilized the years at Bonn for perfecting himself in the exercise of his future functions as rabbi. Together with a number of students who chose the same career, among whom was Samson Raphael Hirsch, later the great champion of Orthodoxy, he founded a speakers' society for the purpose of practicing the art of preaching and also studied the Talmud with Hirsch and others. In the summer of 1832 Geiger received from the university his doctor's degree and a prize for an essay entitled "Was hat Mohammed aus dem Judenthum aufgenommen?" (What did Mohammed borrow from Judaism), a work of value even to the present day. In the fall of that year he was elected rabbi at Wiesbaden. In Bonn he made the acquaintance of Emilie Oppenheim to whom he was engaged in 1833, but did not marry until 1840. The delay was due to the restrictions placed at the time in Germany upon Jewish marriages, and Geiger had to wait years until he could obtain permission from the Frankfort authorities to marry.

In Wiesbaden, where Geiger served as rabbi until 1838, he began to develop his activities both as a reformer and as a scholar. Young though he was, his influence among the liberal-minded rabbis of Germany who strove for a change in Judaism, was great and weighty. He believed that he had a mission and was destined, as he calls it, "to be a useful link in Jewish history,"¹ namely to save Judaism from disintegration and the Jews from indifference to their religion, and consequently thought the office of rabbi in a small community too narrow for his activities. He extended them, therefore, beyond the range of his position. As early as 1835, he convened a Rabbinical conference at Wiesbaden where proposed changes in the form of Judaism were discussed. The conference was small, attended only by a number of Geiger's friends, but it served as the first public expression of the views of the young theologians on the changes they wished to introduce. In the same year, there began to appear his *Wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift für jüdische Theologie*. In this periodical which was both scientific and the organ of the champions of reforms in Judaism, Geiger and his friends gave voice to their opinions

¹ *Nachgelassene Schriften*, Vol. I, p. 147.

and endeavored to establish them by lengthy dissertations upon historical and theological subjects.

These activities placed Geiger in the foremost ranks of the Reform movement, and as a result when the liberal leaders of the Breslau Jewish community looked for a junior rabbi who was to introduce modernism in their midst, their choice fell upon him. Geiger, though aware of the nature of his position which was officially that of Dayyan (judge) and imposed upon its incumbent not only the observance of all laws but also the pronouncing of decisions of religious laws, many of which he considered obsolete and useless, accepted the call. The incongruity in his character displayed by this act, to which attention was called by a late critic² can partly be explained by the fact that he thought that the old type of Judaism would not continue to exist very long, and that he would be instrumental in changing the form of the Jewish religion. A temporary observance of the laws should, therefore, not be considered a hindrance in accepting a distinguished position. In reality, he stated explicitly that, as long as the laws are not changed by a conference of rabbis, it is the duty of the rabbi to observe them, and he even averred that he has conducted and will conduct himself both in private life and in his legal decisions according to the ordinances of the accepted Jewish codes.³

Matters, though, did not run as smoothly as hoped for by Geiger and his friends. The appointment of a man, whose liberal views of Judaism were definitely pronounced, to the position of Dayyan and preacher in an orthodox community created a stir in that city. The senior rabbi, A. S. Tiktin, refused to serve with his colleague, and his party endeavored to remove Geiger from the position. The controversy found an echo through Germany and neighboring countries. Tiktin obtained the Responsa of many orthodox rabbis who declared his colleague unfit for the position. Geiger also published several collections of Responsa from liberal rabbis who championed freedom of thought and research. The strife lasted for some time, even after the death of Tiktin in 1843, inasmuch as his party appointed his son in his place. Ultimately peace was established and Geiger was given a free hand to carry through his reforms.

The strife strengthened the movement and the liberals were emboldened to give a more concrete expression to their views. In the

² Schechter, *Studies in Judaism*, Series III, p. 54.

³ *Nachgelassene Schriften*, Vol. I, p. 18.

polemic literature which was produced as a result of the controversy, the Rabbi of Breslau became the leader of the Reform party and during his twenty-three years of residence in that city, he was an important factor in the promotion of both the idea of reform and its practical realization, participating effectively in all the conferences at the time and moulding their discussions. He, of course, endeavored to elaborate the ideology of the movement in many writings, both of a popular and scientific nature. In 1863 Geiger left Breslau and became rabbi at Frankfort on the Main.

The years spent at Breslau were the most active of Geiger's life. Not only did he distinguish himself during that period as champion, leader, and inspirer of the Reform movement, but his most important contributions to Jewish learning were written at that time. His short stay in Frankfort until 1871 was a time of rest for him. Yet even in these seven years he continued his vigorous activity for the unification of the Reform movement. He was one of the principal men who convened the Cassel Conference (1868) and the Leipzig Synod (1869) and formulated the theses for discussion at these assemblies. He also continued with his scientific studies and published several important essays.

In 1870 he was invited by the Berlin Reform Congregation to become its rabbi. He had received two such calls before that from the same congregation, but had declined them both on account of its extreme reform practices, and also because the congregation represented in its earlier years only a fraction of the community. At this time, though, the situation was reversed; the Reform element formed the majority and the Orthodox the minority of the community. There was also another motive which inclined Geiger to answer the call, that was the prospect of becoming a lecturer at the newly established *Hochschule für die Wissenschaft des Judenthums*, a Rabbinical Seminary conducted in the spirit of the Reform movement. He came there and for four years acted both as rabbi and professor at the Seminary until death took him in his sixty-fourth year.

In attempting to delineate a more or less systematic conception of the ideology of Geiger in regard to the drastic reforms in Judaism which he advocated and championed, one meets with great difficulty, for nowhere in his numerous writings on the subject does he really present a connected statement of his ideas based on definite principles. Such statements must be pieced together from scattered passages in

pamphlets, sermons, and letters, and consequently, it can be neither complete nor logically arranged.

At the outset we must remark that, on the whole, there may be noted a certain dualism in Geiger, a rift between the views he really entertained and those he advocated publicly. The rift is still greater between his views and their application in life. His personal views were extremely radical, while in his public utterances there was a guarded conservative note. Thus, in his letter to Zunz of the 19th of March 1845, he expresses himself that circumcision is a barbaric bloody act, and that though he is cognizant of the fact that this rite is one of the fundamentals of Judaism, he could not defend it wholeheartedly in the controversy precipitated at the time by the declaration of the Frankfort Society of Reform against it. He chose, therefore, not to participate in it.⁴ In the same letter he questions the value of the dietary laws and declares that they are only conducive to separatism. He wonders that Zunz saw fit to reintroduce their observance in his home. Yet, in spite of such sentiments he never advocated their abolition in his public addresses.

The dualism or rather hesitation to apply in life his radical views can partly be explained by Geiger's practical turn of mind which was quite evident in his personal conduct. We gather from the notations in his diary, that at a certain period in his life, he entertained an aversion towards the study of the Talmud. Yet he studied it diligently during his residence at Bonn when he decided to become a rabbi. This study was not motivated by scientific interest but by a practical end in view. We have seen above that Geiger on his arrival in Breslau was not satisfied to act as a mere preacher but insisted on discharging his Rabbinical functions as interpreter of the law, and even claimed to have rendered decisions according to the standard codes, while in his heart he denied their validity. This practicality he followed in his championship of reform. He believed that the reform of Judaism or, as he often termed it, its rejuvenation, ought to go all the way in abolishing all laws and ceremonies, but at the same time he admitted that this was only an ideal to be realized in time. For the present, reform was to proceed slowly and cautiously, and all changes were to be considered as steps in the realization of the greater aim.

In justice to Geiger, we must admit that there was really another motive, a more positive and earnest one than mere practicality which

⁴ Op. cit. Vol. V, p. 181.

made him hesitate in carrying out far-reaching changes in Judaism, but of this later. Let us now see what were Geiger's real views on Judaism and on the form of its revival. These are given to us in a rather intimate correspondence with Joseph Derenbourg. In these letters, young Geiger starts out with negative assertions, namely that the old type of Judaism is not able to meet modern conditions, and consequently should be ignored and a new type evolved. The great defect of the old type is its distinct national character as expressed in the complicated system of laws and ceremonies. This national character places Judaism in modern times at a disadvantage with regard to Christianity which stresses the importance of the individual. Judaism by its national character as well as by some of its beliefs which are not in agreement with truth as conceived in modern times, deadens the religious feelings in the heart of the modern Jew. He insists that in order to overcome the indifference to religion on the part of the Jews, Judaism must become a religion of truth, for since it is the faith of the minority, it must be more rationally founded than Christianity. Besides, it must have an all embracing and living idea which should act as its driving force in order to survive in this rational age.

What then is this powerful idea? It is the passing of Judaism from the particularism it contains to the universalism of a religion of humanity. The aim of that process is not that the Jews should become better Jews but better men. This ideal of religion of humanity seems to be all-absorbing to him, but he does not clarify the inner relationship of that religion with Judaism. He outlines, though, his own belief which seems very close to Deism, namely, trust in a just and merciful world ruler, the worship of whom consists in the meditation of lofty thoughts, and in the performance of noble deeds and actions which call forth such thoughts. Taking this view as a criterion, it would follow that not only would most of the Talmudic laws lose their value, but even a great part of the Biblical. Thus Geiger's revolt against the law would not stop with the Bible, but would go beyond it. However, he does not express himself clearly on the entire question. He emphasizes again and again the necessity of evolving the pure spirit of Judaism from formalism and legalism, but explains neither the essence of the spirit nor the principle of selection from Judaism of those elements which embody that spirit. The religion of humanity which serves him as an ideal is too general and little concreteness of the essence of pure Judaism can be gained from that ideal or aim. Its positive content seems to be the inculcation in the

hearts of its adherents of a belief in God which would tend to promote ethical and humanitarian conduct. Such a belief he thinks, is undoubtedly contained in Judaism, but its effectiveness is hemmed in by the maze of laws and is thus entirely overshadowed by it. The purpose of reform should, therefore, be to disentangle this belief with its concomitant practical phase of conduct from the law-complex. In this disentanglement process the critical method of analysis of the entire historical Judaism plays an important part. It is, in fact, the instrument for the realization of the ideal of the Reform movement, hence the importance placed by it upon the studies often inappropriately named "Science of Judaism." It is this critical method which is to determine what elements in Judaism possess eternal verity, and what elements are only of a temporary nature. The former are not only to be retained, but glorified and emphasized and made effective; the latter are to be abrogated or be allowed to fall in desuetude, inasmuch as their retention would constitute a hindrance to the enunciation of the glorious and noble religious elements of the first order and their effectiveness in the life of the modern Jew.

In such a manner are we to understand the ideology of reform as expressed by Geiger in his series of letters. Its two leading principles are, first, as stated, the emphasis on the universal religious-ethical phase in Judaism and making it effective in life; and second, the application of a critical method to tradition as a means of realization of that aim. It is quite evident that from such a point of view, the criticism should be a thorough one and should penetrate the entire Jewish tradition and its sources of authority, not excluding the Bible.

This thorough-going reform which Geiger advocated could by no means be carried out in practice. The Judaism of that day was not, after all, a lifeless mass which one could shape according to his will. On the contrary, it was a living faith, protected by a complicated tradition which was still observed by congregations throughout Germany. Moreover, Geiger himself, in spite of his radicalism and freedom of thought, never emancipated himself from that age-long tradition with which he was saturated both by training and scholarship. He felt quite deeply that Judaism, even if divested of its national element, would still remain the religion of a group which though scattered throughout the world are united by tradition and history; and it would, therefore, be impossible to break that unity without endangering the very life of the new type of Judaism which is supposed to take the place of the old. It is for this reason that he protests

vigorously against the assertion that the Reform party champions a schism in Israel, and says that one who wants to influence Judaism must hold on fast to history and be saturated with love for the entire spiritual development of Judaism from its early beginning until modern times.⁵ It is only at certain moments when he was moved by the spirit of strife that he spoke of the necessity of a schism, but these were rare. On the whole, Geiger looked upon reform as a phase of the development of Judaism and not as a revolutionary movement within it.

Geiger's practical principles of reform are, therefore, much milder and more elastic than his theoretical. Formally, they are three: development, rejuvenation, and historical continuity. It must be noted, though, that our champion of reform never developed the three principles in a logical and systematic manner, and their meaning must be gauged from scattered statements. By the first, it is to be understood that emphasis should be placed on the intensity of the religious spirit and meaning rather than on the performance of the precepts. The importance of Judaism through the ages, says he, always consisted in the spirit and not in the letter of the law, and the essence of its tradition expressed itself in continual progress and development in accordance with the spirit and condition of the times. The entire oral law, complicated as it is, was only a result of this principle.⁶ Relying upon a quotation from Maimonides, Geiger concludes in this spirit, that the authority of the Talmud does not rest upon its intrinsic value and inherent binding power but upon the fact that all Israel had once accepted it as authoritative. He deplores the fact that the Talmud was closed and did not undergo further development.⁷

This conception of development leads to his second principle, rejuvenation. Looking upon Judaism under the aspect of constant change in accordance with conditions and the spirit of the time, it follows that when the conditions and the spirit change, the laws lose their validity, for the important element in religion is the conviction of the people and not the law.⁸ Hence, it is implied that at least a great part of the law which is not in accord with the conviction of the modern Jews must go, as its retention is only a burden which retards the revitalizing of the real religious spirit of Judaism.⁹ It also

⁵ Ibid., p. 147.

⁶ Ibid., Vol. I, p. 15; Ibid., 92ff.

⁷ Ibid., pp. 93, 97.

⁸ Ibid., p. 100.

⁹ Ibid., p. 29.

follows that such dogmas, as the coming of a personal Messiah, the restoration of Zion, the bodily resurrection of the dead, as well as many laws which aim at the separation of the Jews from other nations, must also go.

These two principles, though they do not advocate an arbitrary and thoroughgoing change in Judaism inasmuch as they seek justification in Jewish history, would have carried Geiger far enough were he to apply them in life to their full extent. But this application was checked by the third principle, historical continuity. Just exactly what this principle connotes is difficult to determine, as Geiger never enunciated it in a sufficiently clear manner. Its general trend seems to be an endeavor to retain as much of traditional Judaism as possible and as many of the laws which do not vigorously oppose the demands of modern life. The source of this force which this principle exerted upon Geiger and his colleagues lay in the psychological hold which tradition and training had upon their spiritual makeup. To this must be added the spirit of the environment. German Jewry had, at the time, just emerged from the ghetto, and no matter how much individual Jews might deviate from Judaism in their private lives, collective Jewry was still dominated by traditional observance of laws and customs. It was for this reason that the leaders of the Reform movement, in spite of their revolt against the law, hardly dared to abrogate really important laws or to declare the authority of the Talmud null and void. They concentrated their efforts on the national beliefs, first because they were incorporated in the prayers, the most important expression of religious worship, and secondly, because they were much easier to modify and to reinterpret. Yet even these beliefs, with one exception, that of bodily resurrection, were retained but in a changed form. In addition, support from authority was sought for such modification.

As a result of the conditions described, Geiger constantly checked himself in practice. This may be seen in his demand to apply the Talmudic principle of marriage annulment when the ceremony of *Halizah** cannot be carried out either because of the refusal of the brother of the deceased to perform it, or because he cannot be found.

* *Halizah* is the ceremony employed in cases where the husband dies without issue. The Bible enjoins in this case either marriage to the brother of the deceased or that ceremony, which consists in the widow's removing, in the presence of the court, a special shoe donned for the purpose from the foot of the brother-in-law while pronouncing certain phrases of condemnation for refusal to marry her. She is then allowed to marry any one else.

This principle declares that all marriages derive their validity from the tacit consent of the rabbis to such acts, and that in certain cases the rabbis can withdraw their consent even after the marriage had taken place thus invalidating it retroactively. It is true that the rabbis seldom apply the principle, and certainly not in cases mentioned by Geiger. But the fact that he sought Rabbinic authority for this reform and did not declare the entire law of *Halizah* null on the strength of his own principles—that it does not agree with life and with the conceptions of the modern Jew—shows the extent of the influence which tradition still exerted upon him.

This tendency is especially evident in Geiger's attitude toward the retention of Hebrew in the prayer book which, as is well-known, was the most important question discussed at the Second Rabbinical Conference at Frankfort in the year 1845. In accordance with his theory, he argued that from a strictly legal point of view there is no obligation to pray in Hebrew only. He even went further and refuted the argument of the more conservative members of the Conference, that the use of Hebrew is a means of strengthening Judaism, by insisting that the Jewish religion needs no such assistance. Hebrew, he said, is only a national bond not a religious one, and since the intention of the Reform movement is to divest Judaism of its national element, there is no reason for the retention of Hebrew in the Prayer Book. Yet, the very same man was instrumental in having the Conference pass a resolution the day after these utterances were made by him, that Hebrew be retained for the present. However, while this appears as a compromise, we have a more explicit and positive statement from him on the subject which expresses his feeling toward the Hebrew language. In the preface to the prayer book issued by him in 1860, he states that while in private prayers there is no necessity for Hebrew, for the individual can best express his religious feelings in a language which he understands, yet it must be retained by all means in the public service. He says: "A celebration, especially a religious one, does not affect the soul merely by its content, but also by all the memories connected with it from early times. When we change its form, we thereby snap the bond of continuity and the celebration is no more the loved one of old, but something new and cold and contains little of the glow which warms the soul."¹⁰ Accordingly he retained in the Prayer Book abbreviated Sabbath *Shaharit* (morning) and *Musaf* (additional) services in Hebrew. Thus was

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 213.

the force which his principle of historical continuity exerted upon him.

The same attitude is evident in the practical demands for the change of the laws. In spite of his theoretical negative view of the value of the laws, he seldom asked to abrogate them entirely but sought to modify them. He expressed himself in the theses he presented to the Leipzig Synod in 1869 that the ceremony of *Halizah* be at least modified for the present and insisted upon the need of a religious divorce in addition to a civil one, though he held that the document must be modified and modernized in form. Holdheim and other radical leaders declared the Jewish divorce unnecessary and insisted only on a civil one. On the other hand, Geiger was quite consistent in his antagonism to the expression of nationalism in the Prayer Book. He sought to eradicate all possible mention of a restoration of Zion even in a veiled and symbolic form, and likewise contended violently against the dogma of resurrection, probably not because of its supernaturalness, but on account of its national import. He even strove to delete the prayers referring to the selection of Israel. Such prayers, he argued, tend to foster chauvinism and to lower the estimation of other peoples. He even tried to harmonize this view with the theory of the mission of Israel, which he championed and which was to him the sole "raison d'être" for the continuation of the existence of Judaism, by saying that the preeminence of Israel can be achieved only by their own efforts in the realization of the mission. He failed, though, to explain the theory why a group of people which is not endowed with special aptitude for such a task should arrogate to itself a mission and even be ready to suffer for its sake.

However, this inconsistency was not the only logical flaw in Geiger's activity as a reformer in both its intellectual and practical phases. We can say that in spite of his oft-repeated assertion that he abhors half-way measures, he himself never went even half-way in the practical realization of his own ideas. He was checked to a great extent by the feelings of loyalty and love to a tradition which he intellectually repudiated, and what is more he never even succeeded in divesting himself entirely of his Jewish nationalism.

64. SAMUEL HOLDHEIM

The second important leader of the Reform movement was Samuel Holdheim (1806-1860). He did not possess the learning and scholarship of Geiger, but he was more thorough and consequential in his striving for a change in Judaism; and by daring to apply his

principles in practice, he exerted great influence upon the movement. He was born in Kempen, a town in the Polish province of Prussia, the Jewish community of which was distinguished by its orthodoxy. His training was an exclusively Talmudic one, and until his marriage to the daughter of one of the rabbis of Posen, he had no knowledge of any secular study nor of any European language. It was his wife who first taught him the rudiments of German. He soon, however, surpassed her, a fact which caused great changes in his attitude towards orthodoxy and also in his relation to his wife. The marital strife resulting from that change ended in a divorce, and Holdheim left his native town and went to Prague where he matriculated at the university. There he became thoroughly imbued with the ideals of reform and on his appointment after graduation to a Rabbinical position at Frankfort on the Oder, in 1830, began to apply his principles in practice. He was at first cautious in his actions, introducing reforms of minor importance, and this caution he continued even after he was appointed in 1840 by the Duke of Mecklenburg-Schwerin as chief rabbi of that state. But when the second strife about the prayer book of the Hamburg Temple broke out in that year, Holdheim gave his full approval of these changes, and thus entered openly the ranks of the leading champions of reform. From that time on, he threw caution to the winds and identified himself with the radical tendency of the movement. In 1843 he published his book *Über die Autonomie der Rabbinen und das Princip der jüdischen Ehe* (On the Autonomy of the Rabbis and the Principle of Jewish Marriage), where he expounded his views in a systematic manner. In his subsequent activities he sought to carry his views, which tended towards a thorough-going modification of Judaism, into practice. When the Berlin Reform Congregation which embodied in its program the introduction of drastic changes in the Jewish religion, extended in the year 1846 an invitation to Holdheim to become its spiritual leader, he eagerly accepted it, and held that office until the day of his death.

In his theoretical views, radical as they were, Holdheim probably did not go any further than Geiger, for their private views were almost identical. The principles laid down by Holdheim that a break with Talmudic Judaism and its entire method of interpretation of the Bible is unavoidable and that the criterion of acceptance of Judaism is only the inner conviction of the Jews of the time, can be elicited also from Geiger's teachings. Yet there was a wide gap between the two. The latter, as we have seen, was constantly checked by his sense of

loyalty to and love for tradition and insisted on historical continuity, a principle which prevented him from putting his views into practice. The former, who had no historical perspective and who lacked emotion, had no scruples. Once he had renounced his adherence to the Orthodox party and became convinced that Judaism must adjust itself to the conditions of present day life, he went to extremes and demanded complete adjustment.

Like all the leaders of the Reform movement, Holdheim was permeated by the spirit of revolt against the law, and the desire to divest Judaism of its national elements. In the attempt to found the justification of such wishes on some historical and quasi-scientific basis, he proceeds on the whole in a systematic manner, and although he displays much casuistry, his method possesses coherence. He directs his attack primarily upon the national element of Judaism, and advocating its rejection, he proceeds to prove that the abrogation of many of the laws and precepts follows as a necessary corollary. The Torah, according to him, contains two elements, a purely religious human one which is valid for all men and all time, and a national which is applicable only to the Jews in a certain time and a certain place. Here he follows Spinoza (Vol. II, p. 267) and Mendelssohn, though he does not mention the first by name, in asserting that the greater part of the laws of the Torah were laws given by God exclusively for the purpose of maintaining the Jewish state. Even such laws as those relating to the Sabbath and others similar in character, which apparently had nothing to do with the political existence of the people were, in his opinion, state measures. The Jewish state was a theocracy, and in it religious and political laws were not distinguished; all laws partook simultaneously of the character of both. It follows, therefore, that with the destruction of the Jewish state and with the Jews viewing themselves as an integral part of the body politic of the land in which they reside, that the laws which tend to separate them from the life of their neighbors have lost their validity. He attempts to justify his view by quoting a statement from the Mishnah which says, "All precepts which are dependent in their observance upon the land, i.e. Palestine, are observed only in the land, but precepts which are independent of the land are observed both in the land and out of it."¹¹ The meaning of that statement is quite clear; by "dependence upon the land," is meant merely immediate relation of the precepts to the soil, a relation expressed in such laws as the giving of tithes (Ma'aser)

¹¹ Kiddushin I, 9.

to the Levites and offerings (Terumah) to the priests from the fruit of the soil, and similar ones. It was interpreted thus in the Gemarah and in the subsequent Jewish literature. Holdheim, though, interprets it differently. He does not take the word "land" to mean soil, but state and body politic. Accordingly he concludes that all laws which are conditioned by the life in a political state or even by that of a nation are not observed when that state is abolished. From this point of view, not only is the entire Jewish civil law null and void, but even the Sabbath laws have no meaning. The idea of the Sabbath, namely, the sanctification of man through rest is valid, but all the numerous prohibitions connected with that day are abrogated as they were intended primarily for a political life. He concludes, therefore, that the Jews living in other lands as members of their body politic are subjected to the civil laws of the states in most of the relations of life, except the purely religious ones.

As said, Holdheim did not apply any check on his views and endeavored to realize them in life as much as possible. He, therefore, advocated the abolition of the Jewish divorce and the recognition of the enactment of the law of the land in this matter as sufficient, for divorce is, in his opinion, a purely civil affair. He dealt differently, though, with the marriage ceremony. Marriage, says he, is from the pure conception of Jewish law also a civil act, but life has invested it with a religious value which has become inherent in it, and consequently the Jewish religious ceremony should be retained by all means.¹² He went even further and approved the transfer of the Sabbath from Saturday to Sunday, nor did he object to the abolition of circumcision. The purpose of the first is, according to him, the sanctification of man and the choice of the particular day is a mere incident, based primarily on a peculiar conception of the creation of the world. The second, says Holdheim, as a symbol of the covenant concluded between God and Abraham and expressing a conception of a particularistic nature, has lost all significance and embodies no more a religious truth. It should, therefore, be abolished or at least no objection should be raised to the neglect of its performance. Thus did this radical reformer, who spent his early life in the exclusive study of the Talmud and Rabbinic codes, proceed to divest Judaism from its concrete expression in life, and to make it as abstract a collection of religious and moral truths as possible. What, according to such a conception of Judaism, was really left for the Jews as their religious

¹² *Autonomie der Rabbinen*, pp. 156-157.

mission in the world for which purpose they must continue to exist as a group or brotherhood is, of course, difficult to see. Unity of God, brotherhood of man, nobility or goodness, the main contents of that mission, are no more the exclusive monopoly of the Jews and any society of men may lay claim to them and devote themselves to their realization. This, however, is not the only flaw in the reasoning of Holdheim and even in that of Geiger, but their complete enumeration would carry us beyond the scope of this work.

Needless to say that Holdheim's radical views and practices found very few followers in Germany at the time. Even Geiger's views were not totally accepted. Only the Berlin Reform Congregation applied the radical principles into practice, and even this one later modified its conduct. The power of tradition and that of a living Judaism was too strong to overcome. Most of the liberal congregations were satisfied with the changes and innovations in the liturgy and public worship. The observance or non-observance of the laws were left to the individual Jews. No official repudiation of the law on a large scale was ever made. It is true that the Augsburg Synod of 1871, the latest of all such assemblies declared, "that only the essence of Judaism and its ethical aims suffer no change, but the form of Judaism changes." Still no definite statement was issued to what extent this change should be made, nor what sources of authority should be repudiated in order to accomplish this change.

Yet the ideas of Geiger and Holdheim express, to a degree, the general tendency of the movement as a whole, though probably only in its potential phase. Most of these ideas became part and parcel of the ideology of the movement and were entertained by many of its leaders. They were never realized in Germany, but ultimately found expression in the program of the movement in the United States, adopted in 1885. The fact that even there subsequent conditions of life turned the movement into more conservative channels does not affect the presentation of its ideology as conceived by two of its great leaders in the nineteenth century.

65. *THE CONSERVATIVE MOVEMENT*

The Reform movement described in the foregoing section, though wide-spread and effective, was, as is well known, not the only expression of the spiritual fermentation in German Jewry. Traditional Judaism was still living and active. Accordingly we note two other movements in Jewry in those days, one which, for want of a

better name, we shall call by its present day appellation, the Conservative, and the other the neo-Orthodox.

Conservatism, like the Reform movement, was not of a homogeneous character. Its propounders were much less united on the principles and still less on their application into practice than the champions of Reform, and with the exception of one abortive attempt, no Rabbinical conferences or synods were called by its protagonists. It was primarily an expression of views of individuals of spiritual strength and great learning, whom many Jews recognized as their representatives and tacitly accepted their opinions. In fact, there was no need for acceptance, as the views expressed mainly a negation of sweeping deviations from the historical type of Judaism and aimed to preserve its most important values. Those Jews, who negated these deviations, became the followers of the men whom we call leaders of Conservatism.

This lack of complete harmony in views, principles, and practice, by no means prevents us from discerning a general well-established unity of thought and even a unified direction in the practice of Judaism. Still the movement allowed divergence of shades and nuances in both. The general features of this spiritual movement are, to my mind, three. The first is the recognition that a definite change had entered in Jewish life; the old rigidity of Judaism, both as a religion and as a view of life, which controlled the thoughts and deeds of the individual and which allowed no room for question or criticism of law, custom, or sacred writings can not continue any longer. There must therefore be some adjustment with the views of the new sciences, learning, and the conditions of life. From this view or principle follows the legitimacy of freedom of thought and expression of critical opinions. To what degree and extent freedom should be allowed and what are the limitations to be placed on it was never determined nor do such things matter. What is important is the fact that freedom of thought and critical analysis of institutions, documents, laws, and customs are compatible with good Jewishness and are permissible. That such an attitude tacitly accepts the principle of development in Judaism is quite evident.

The other two features are, a positive relation to the law and a belief in the nationhood of Israel. By the first is meant that the law as a whole—not taking into consideration some necessary slight modifications—or at least the greater part of it, is an inseparable element of the religion of Israel, and it is by means of its observance

that the essential truths of that religion can be preserved and transmitted. The value of the law is enhanced and buttressed by the belief in the nationhood of Israel. This belief though must not be construed to express the present meaning of the secular or semi-secular nationalism. It connotes the existence of the Jews throughout history as a distinct people, distinct in religion, in its law, and its life, and the necessity of the continuation of such existence. In this historical existence of Israel which is a fact and needs no apology for its further continuation, religious and national traits were so merged together in the consciousness of the group that they cannot be separated any more. And it is the consciousness of Israel which gives both sanction and authority to the laws, irrespective of whether they are all divine or some are man-made. The laws and forms of religion are also the bonds of unity of all the members of the people scattered throughout the world. Speaking of Israel, we must include all Jews and all countries, and all changes must be made with a view to preserve that unity and not to sever it. In other words, the view can be summed up in a few words: *Torah we-Yisrael*, i.e. religion and Israel are inseparable, and we cannot abstract religious truths without taking in consideration the life, law, and the data of the consciousness of the people in its entire existence. These are, as a rule, the principles in their most general form, in which all propounders of what we call Conservatism concur, but they are, of course, given different interpretations and are subject to great modifications. We shall now turn to analyze briefly the views of the leading proponents of the movement and begin with one who was, for a great part of his life, close to the Reform tendency, but later gravitated to the right and can be considered an exponent of the middle-way tendency—as Conservatism is sometimes called—in Judaism. This was Leopold Zunz.

66. YOM-TOB LIPPMAN (LEOPOLD) ZUNZ

Yom-Tob Lippman Zunz (1796-1886) was born in the city of Detmold in the Rhine province to parents of very modest circumstances; his father was the cantor of the Jewish community there. At the age of nine, he was orphaned, and this lad, who was destined to become the founder of modern Jewish learning, was sent to a Jewish orphanage in Wolfenbüttel to be reared there. In that institution, he spent a great part of his youth and acquired extensive knowledge, mostly by his own initiative, in Jewish and secular subjects. In the acquisition of that knowledge, he was encouraged by his friend who

was also reared in the same place, Isaac Marcus Jost (Sec. 86). Together, the two boys slaked their thirst for wisdom. In the year 1809 Zunz entered the gymnasium at Wolfenbüttel whence he graduated in 1815. He then left for Berlin where he registered at the university.

Zunz reached the age of twenty-five saturated with knowledge and wisdom but had not yet found his way in life. The days were those of the incipient Reform movement, and for a time he thought that he was destined to be a preacher in Israel. But preaching was as yet not a profession for though he frequently delivered sermons in the private Reform Synagogue in Berlin, he was not paid for his services. His destiny lay in another direction and a certain event gave him the impetus for the development of his great powers as the pilot in the uncharted sea of Jewish literature. In the year 1820 Zunz, together with the young jurist, Eduard Gans, and Moses Moser founded the "Society for the Culture and the Science of the Jews" (Verein für Kultur und Wissenschaft der Juden). The purpose of these men was to stem the tide of conversion and apostasy among the Jews. They believed that by increasing Jewish knowledge, they would show the young generation the beauty of Judaism and thus retain their loyalty. The program of the society was wide and embrative, but the days were not suited for its realization, and the attempt was abortive. In a few years, it was disbanded, and its president, Gans, was among the first to embrace Christianity. The only thing of value it accomplished was the publication of an annual called *Zeitschrift für die Wissenschaft des Judenthums*, of which Zunz was the editor. There he published a number of important articles, such as "The Life of Rashi" (Solomon ben Isaac, Vol. I, Sec. III); *Etwas über die rabbinische Literatur*; and, *Über die in hebräisch-jüdische Schriften vorkommenden hispanischen Ortsnamen* (On the names of Spanish Cities in the Hebrew writings). In these articles, though their titles sound technical, Zunz had already developed a view of Judaism and Jewish history as well as a conception of his future scientific activity. In the introduction to the last-named article, where he outlines a plan for the history of the Jews or better for that of Judaism, he makes the following remarks: With the disintegration of Israel's political life, he has not ceased to exist as a nation. Life pulsated in his veins, and where there is life there is activity and movement. But, says Zunz, when a people cannot express its life in stirring actions of a military or political nature, thought and feeling take their place. The world of thought, feeling, and sentiment embodied in books was then

the world of the Jews for centuries. The other expression of Jewish life is suffering, or rather the reaction to the numerous sufferings that came to Israel from the outside world. These two phases, thought, in its embrative connotation, and suffering, are the warp and woof of Jewish history, according to Zunz. This view is undoubtedly narrow and imperfect, for it neglects the people at large as a living organism which expressed its activities throughout history in multifarious ways. Zunz himself later changed his view. The importance, however, lies in his emphasis upon the Jews having been a living national body through the ages, and in the attachment of great value to the spiritual activity in exile in all its phases considering it an original function of the life of Israel. How greatly this view differs from that of the leaders of the Reform movement.

In the article on Rabbinic literature Zunz expressed his strong almost naive belief in the efficacy of "Jewish Science" (Jüdische Wissenschaft) as a panacea for the ills of his people in his day, for he thought that the past should teach the present. Moreover, he hoped that it would raise the Jewish prestige among the nations and that it ultimately would bring about the emancipation and equalization of the Jews. Zunz, however, possessed nobler motives for his devotion to Jewish studies, namely deep love for his people and its literature, but these beliefs were in his youth contributory factors which spurred him on to his great life work.

When the Society for the Culture and the Science of the Jews was disbanded, Zunz was for a time in despair. He saw the grand edifice of Judaism toppling, for many were there who bartered away the heritage of their fathers which they no more understood or appreciated for a mess of pottage, embracing Christianity for the sake of position and social prestige. Little peace was there also within the House of Israel; ignorance was rampant, knowledge despised, and arrogance dominant. In such times, young Zunz aroused himself from despair and devoted himself not to preaching but to teaching Jewish knowledge by the written word, and became the builder of Jewish science. His first great work was *Die gottesdienstlichen Vorträge der Juden* (The Sermons of the Jews) published in 1832. This classic work on the entire Agada, strangely enough, was conceived and executed as a piece of *Tendenz Literatur*, namely, to convince the Prussian government, which at the time closed the early Reform Temples and prohibited the delivery of German sermons as innovations, that sermons are not new in Israel but were preached from

time immemorial. We undoubtedly have to thank the government for its prohibition as it was the cause of this great work.

Yet in spite of the impression which the book made upon the scholarly world, Zunz did not find for some time a suitable occupation to provide him with a respectable living. He made several attempts to obtain a Rabbinical position in a few German communities, but they were unsuccessful. At last after many vigorous efforts on the part of his friends, he was appointed in the year 1836 preacher in the Temple at Prague, Bohemia. However, the position, which imposed upon him the performance of numerous functions, was not to the liking of the great scholar and he resigned that same year. On his return to Berlin, he supported himself for several years by journalistic work and private tutoring, until he was appointed in 1841 by the Jewish community as director of its newly founded Teachers' Seminary. This position he held until his old age when he was pensioned off. Henceforth, he devoted himself exclusively to his beloved Jewish science and produced book after book. In 1845 he published his *Zur Geschichte und Literatur* (On History and Literature), a work which blazed the path in the history and literature of the Jews of France and Germany during the entire Middle Ages. This was followed in 1855 by *Die synagogale Poesie des Mittelalters* (The Poetry of the Synagogue in the Middle Ages), where he systematized with exceptional skill the great mass of *Piyyutim* and the various branches of sacred poetry of the Jews which gave expression to the soul of the nation for a thousand years. Later followed *Der Ritus der Juden* (The Ritual of the Jews) and the *Literaturgeschichte der synagogalen Poesie* (History of the Literature of the Poetry of the Synagogue). In 1874 there were published three volumes of his essays on all subjects within the entire domain of Jewish history and literature. Besides, he contributed during his long active life, essays and articles to all Jewish and to many leading general publications, and edited a translation in German of the Old Testament, which was received with such favor that from the time of its appearance in 1838 up to the day of his death in 1886 it was issued in thirteen editions.

As we have seen even in the very beginning of his literary activity, Zunz expressed his strong belief in the nationhood of Israel and his continuing to exist as such. Still for a great part of his life he was inclined towards the Reform movement. Reform to him, however, meant the beautification and modernization of the public worship and not a real change in the entire character of Judaism. But the more he

immersed himself in the study of Jewish literature, the deeper he delved into the sources of the Jewish spirit, the more he became convinced of the necessity of preserving to a great extent the law and its concomitant belief in the national character of Judaism, for it is only by these means that Judaism and the Jews can continue to exist in the future. Accordingly, when the Reform movement began to express itself in unequivocal terms against the law and against Jewish nationalism in any form, Zunz became its opponent.

He voiced his opposition first in an article called *Thefillin* (Phylacteries), published in Busch's *Jahrbuch für Israeliten*, in 1843. This was originally a sermon preached at a *Bar Mitzwah* ceremony twenty years before, and revised at the time. In this article he enunciates the value of the observance of the precepts and argues vehemently against those who believe that they can preserve the eternal and inner meaning of the religious truths of Judaism without observance of the law. He asks, what will guarantee this preservation if Judaism will be merely an abstract conception? What will mark the people as servants of the Lord, as they call themselves, if they refuse to bear any evident sign of their obedience to Him? He continues and says that only when the law which carried the Jews over abysses of suffering, is observed in the home, can the young Jew remain loyal to His God and people and be permeated with the noble religious and moral ideas which Judaism intends to convey.¹³ The whole tenor of the essay is to emphasize the necessity of observance of the laws as the only means of preservation of Judaism.

This idea he brought out with more scientific precision in his *Responsum* on circumcision written in 1844 on account of the controversy which arose at the time about the declaration of the Frankfurt Reform Society against this rite. In the essay which is logically divided into three parts, Zunz first speaks of the precepts in general and their classification. After surveying the various classifications of the laws made by Jewish thinkers from Saadia to Mendelssohn, he points out that even the non-rational laws determine the character of both the Jewish people and Judaism by evident signs. The laws, says he, were merged completely with both the suffering and the hopes of Israel, and hence they became not only holy but the source of Jewish life. There is no ground for assuming a division of the laws or ceremonies into permanent and transient. As for circumcision, it is not a ceremony, nor even a mere precept but a fundamental form of

¹³ *Gesammelte Schriften* Vol. II, pp. 133, 134.

Judaism like the Sabbath. He declares, therefore, that the Jewish community in its large connotation, which in exile takes the place of the Jewish government, has a right to exclude one from membership if he disregards this right wilfully. A community, such as the Jews, cannot exist on merely negative principles, namely denying erroneous God-ideas or even merely emphasizing moral principles, for such is really the essence of the true religion of all mankind and not of any group. He proclaims proudly that the Jews should not sacrifice even one precept on the altar of civil liberty. This liberty is not the ultimate aim of humanity, and besides, says he, they will attain it by other means.¹⁴

Thus did Zunz declare in clear terms his attitude towards the law and the conception of Jewish particularism or nationhood. He continued to oppose the Reform movement in a number of other articles. His last expression on the subject is contained in a short letter to Geiger written in 1845 in answer to the latter's correspondence where, as mentioned, he chides Zunz on his reactionary attitude. There he sums up his views, saying, "We must reform ourselves and not our religion. We should attack only evil practices that crept in our religious life whether from within or from without, but not the holy heritage. The attack against the Talmud which is at present carried on expresses the attitude of apostates."¹⁵

Zunz was neither philosopher nor theologian, and it could not be expected that he should have elaborated his views in a systematic way, nor that he should go into detail and explain what laws are to be modified and in what manner. His general conception, though, is clear, namely that the Torah, as accepted and lived by the Jews through the generations, is valid and that the people of Israel is to continue its existence in its distinctness and unity. He did not, of course, hesitate to retain his freedom for research and expression of critical views of religious documents. Thus he is quite radical in his Biblical studies. Still, taking in consideration his views which we have outlined, we may consider him as one of the protagonists of Conservative Judaism.

67. ZECHARIAH FRANKEL

If Zunz can be considered one of the protagonists of that movement in Judaism known as Conservative, we must then acknowledge

¹⁴ Ibid., pp. 191-203.

¹⁵ Geiger's *Nachgelassene Schriften* Vol. IV, p. 184.

Zechariah Frankel (1801-1875) as the main exponent, probably the founder of that movement. He was the man who gave to this tendency the clearest expression, enunciated its principles, fought its battles, and turned it into a movement by raising numerous disciples who trod in his path.

Frankel was born at Prague to parents who were in comfortable circumstances and descendants of ancient families whose members were distinguished both for scholarship and communal leadership for over two centuries. In accordance with the custom of the time, he attended the Yeshibah of the rabbi of the city and acquired deep and wide Talmudic knowledge. He, however, studied privately also European languages and the sciences in which he was likewise very proficient. Thus, the first twenty-four years of his life passed in assiduous study in his home town. In the year 1824 he went to Budapest and presented himself for examination at the gymnasium, received his diploma, and entered the university of that city. There he spent seven years, specializing in the classical languages, and finally received his doctor's degree for his dissertation *Vorstudien zur Septuaginta* (Prolegomena to the Septuagint). In that year he also received his Rabbinical ordination and applied to the governor of Bohemia for the approval of his appointment as rabbi of the district of Leitmeritz, a position which was vacant at the time. It is interesting to note that in order to prove to the government his mastery of languages, he wrote his application in eight languages, four ancient and four modern. He was immediately appointed rabbi of the district with Teplitz as his headquarters. It did not take long and Frankel became known through his scholarship and his Rabbinical activity beyond the borders of his district, and as a result, the minister of education and religion in the neighboring kingdom of Saxony turned to him for an explanation of the system of Jewish public worship and the methods of religious education. Frankel answered him in detail and with great skill, and won his admiration and friendship. Several years later, in 1836, when the Rabbinical position at Dresden became vacant, he was called by the government to occupy that position which he held for eighteen years. For years he worked indefatigably for the amelioration of Jewish life in that country in all its phases and he succeeded in his endeavors. It was through his efforts that the Jews were allowed to build synagogues in Saxony, where the erection of such edifices was forbidden for centuries, that the shameful Mediaeval form of the oath administered to the Jews by the courts (More

Judacio) was abolished and that they were granted general civil rights, though not full equality. He likewise introduced many improvements in the religious life of the communities and established schools in all cities where there were Jewish settlements.

His activities, however, were not limited to the Jews of Saxony, but extended to all Jews of Germany, inasmuch as he participated in all spiritual and intellectual movements. His *Responsum* on the question of the new Prayer Book of the Hamburg Temple made a great impression throughout Germany. He founded in 1844 a monthly called *Zeitschrift für jüdische religiöse Interessen* which was published for three years and where he systematically developed his views on Judaism and attempted to stem the trend of radical reform. His influence was still more marked by the display of his great scholarship and erudition through a series of important works. Frankel was distinguished by his assiduity in study, and during all the years of his multifariously active Rabbinate he did not interrupt his studies even for a short time. His first work published in 1838 was the *Eidesleistung der Juden* (The Jewish Deposition of the Oath). This work, like Zunz's *Gottesdienstliche Vorträge*, had a practical motive, namely, to influence the government to abolish the obnoxious Jewish oath, and as we have seen accomplished its aim. This fact, however, does not minimize its scientific value, of which more will be said later. This was followed by his second work *Vorstudien zur Septuaginta* where all questions relating to this oldest translation of the Bible are discussed and the early development of Halakah traced.

Frankel, as said, opposed the Reform movement vigorously and wrote numerous articles against it both in his own *Zeitschrift* and in the other periodicals of the day, especially in the *Orient*. Yet he decided to participate in the Frankfort Rabbinical Conference in 1845 with the hope of diverting the decisions of this gathering from the path of radical reform into a moderate and conservative way of action. He fought valiantly for the retention of Hebrew in the synagogue service, thus endeavoring to preserve religious unity in Israel, but did not succeed. He then left the conference and openly denounced the leaders as men who desire to create a breach in Jewry.

While Frankel was carrying on these activities he was invited by the Berlin Jewish community to occupy the position of rabbi in that city, an office which was vacant for half a century. He at first accepted the offer and his election was approved of by the government, but suddenly he changed his mind and refused to leave his post at Dres-

den. He spent the remaining eight years of his Rabbinical service in that city in public and scholarly activity. During that period he published a great work on Talmudic law called *Der gerichtliche Beweis nach mosaisch-talmudischem Rechte* (Court Evidence in Jewish Law) and his second part of Septuagint studies dealing with the influence of Palestinian Biblical exegesis upon the Alexandrian method of the interpretation of the law.

In the year 1853 there entered a great change in the life of Zechariah Frankel. His conservative views, his scholarship, and the great energy he displayed in multifarious Jewish activity for many years, made him the most suitable candidate for the post of director of the first Rabbinical Seminary founded that year at Breslau by the executors of the will of the banker, Jonas Frankel, who left a large sum of money for that purpose. He accepted that post and for twenty-two years until the day of his death, he trained a generation of rabbis, who, imbued with his thoughts and following his ways, greatly influenced the Jews of Germany and the neighboring countries, and helped to stabilize the conservative tendency in Judaism. During that period when he was wholly occupied with the imparting of knowledge to students, his own scholarly activity increased and its results were embodied in numerous works, among them the *Darkê ha-Mishnah* (The Ways of the Mishnah), an introduction to the study of Halakah and the *Mebo ha-Yerushalmi* (Introduction to the Palestinian Talmud) besides numerous articles in the *Monatsschrift für Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judenthums*, established by him in 1852 and edited by him until his death. This periodical was in itself an institution of learning (it ceased publication in 1938, in its 84th year) and was, during this long time, the literary seminary where for several generations all Jewish scholars of importance were nurtured and trained.

We will now turn to the presentation of the views on Jews and Judaism of this leading rabbi and teacher in his generation. His early attempt in that direction is contained in his introduction to the *Vorstudien*. There, he differs with Zunz, who even as late as 1845 concludes his introduction to his work *Zur Geschichte und Literatur* with the statement that "the equalization of the Jews in life will result from the equalization of the science of Judaism," and says that this should not be the purpose of the cultivators of Jewish knowledge. Were the case so, then the tendency to obtain civil equality by parading our past literary glory in order to prove our worthiness of

such equality would only be a kind of spiritual slavery. Nay, this is not the purpose. The motive for these studies, says Frankel, is the necessity of improving the state of Judaism in modern times. There are, he continues, certain points and phases in religion which cannot withstand the onrush of the modern spirit, and we must stabilize Judaism and fortify it against attacks. This can be done only by diligent research into its sources. Mere negation of laws and abstraction of principles as the reformers are doing, will only destroy but not build. Religion must be a practical and tangible thing, and any attempt to divest the Torah of its institutions endangers the existence of the Jews. Only by diligent study and research, will we be able to discover what is essential and what is non-essential, namely what are the accretions which could be disposed of and what are the religious forms which should be retained at all costs.¹⁶

From these words we see clearly that while Frankel opposed the Reform movement, he did not accept the rigid view of Orthodoxy that nothing should be changed in Judaism but that it must be observed with all its customs and practices as handed down through the ages. A clear statement of his views on the inseparableness of Jewish nationalism from Judaism, on the value of the laws, and at the same time on the necessity of some reform in particulars, is expressed in his *Responsum* against the Prayer Book published by the leaders of the Hamburg Temple. He does not approve of Hākam Bernays' condemnation of that book who declared it illegal, as the legality of the book is not of paramount importance. The question, says he, is not whether changes made in synagogue ritual agree with the decisions of certain authorities or not, for public prayer is a matter of the entire nation, and any change in its form must agree with the traditional spirit of that nation. The removal of the hope for the restoration of Zion, the abolition of any reference to Jewish nationality are changes which are contrary to the very essence of Judaism. The hope for restoration, he continues, is a holy and noble feeling which raises the prestige of the Jews in the eyes of the world. It proves that in spite of all its suffering, the Jewish people does not despair and still strives for freedom, though in a distant and in an indefinite future. It does not by any means jeopardize Jewish loyalty to the countries wherein they reside, but, on the contrary, the nations will honor the Jews the more for their striving, for the noble vision will make them better citizens and subjects. He cites as an illustra-

¹⁶ *Vorstudien*, Introduction, pp. 4-5.

tion of his contention the fact that many Greeks residing in the Austrian Empire sympathized with and were actively engaged in helping the liberation of Greece, and yet no one even impugned their loyalty. This hope and the belief that the Jews exist for their own purpose gives the people strength in its struggle. On the other hand, the mission idea which avers that the Jews must exist as a religious group for the sake of spreading noble religious ideas among the nations of the world is meaningless. When Judaism is divested of its practical and legal phase and the hope of national restoration abolished, it is doubtful whether the Jews can continue to exist and they may disappear together with their mission. He admits that certain particular practices need to be changed, but such changes must be accomplished in accordance with the spirit of tradition and by means of that tradition.¹⁷

This last idea he stated still more explicitly in the leading article of the first volume of his *Zeitschrift*, where he enunciates his program. We desire, says he, peace between the Torah and life, not a compromise, progress within the bounds of the law, a renaissance of Jews and Judaism by themselves and through themselves, but not through external aims and influences. There are, he continues, two parties in present day Jewry, one the extreme orthodox Jews who are afraid to depart from any custom and observance handed down to them by their ancestors, lest the complete structure tumble, and the other the reformers. There are, however, many who though following the first party in their view that Judaism is a religion of practice and that Jewish life must be distinct and particularized, yet insist on emphasizing the inner value of the laws and make performance meaningful and not a mere mechanical act. These people further believe that many particular observances are somewhat exaggerated, and that this mass of minutae do not bring the Jew nearer to the Torah but may even estrange him. It is necessary, therefore, to change certain things as long as the main body of laws is not touched.¹⁸

On the basis of these principles, Frankel carried on his struggle at the Frankfort Rabbinical Conference for the retention of Hebrew in the synagogue. In the several speeches he delivered there, he emphasized again and again that the observance of the laws is the breath of life of Judaism. The spirit of the time which some leading reformers declared to be the criterion of religion, he claimed, is not

¹⁷ Orient, Vol. III.

¹⁸ *Zeitschrift* Vol. I.

reliable, for it changes in each generation while Judaism should stand forever. Hebrew, he insisted, is an important part of the essence of Judaism and can by no means be sacrificed. Should the Conference declare for its removal from the prayer book, argued Frankel, they would break Jewish unity, for German Jewry is only a fraction of the world Jewry and it would create a rift between the Jews of that country and the Jews of all other lands. Furthermore, religion is only an abstract thought and unless it is clothed in laws and precepts, it can not influence life. With the abolition of Hebrew as well as of many precepts now in practice, concluded Frankel, Judaism would ultimately weaken and perish.

When he left the Conference, he endeavored to call one of his own for the purpose of formulating a definite program for the Conservative party he wished to create. A call was issued by Frankel together with Rabbi David Joel, one of the orthodox rabbis of Silesia imbued with the modern spirit for an assembly of scholars and theologians. But this assembly never took place on account of the opposition of the extreme Orthodox. It is to be regretted that such a gathering was not held, for because of it the followers of that current in Judaism never formulated a definite program and it cannot be determined to what extent Frankel was ready to carry his principles of change.

The general outline of his views, however, is quite clear. These are, the positive value of the law, the necessity of its observance and the loyalty to Jewish nationhood and unity at all costs, together with a certain amount of freedom of research and even in changing unimportant particulars of law. Frankel was, of course, much closer than Zunz to the Orthodox type of Judaism, as he was opposed to Biblical criticism and besides was a master of the Talmud and was thoroughly saturated with love for all institutions, laws, and nationalistic views and ideas. It is these principles and views which were taught at his Seminary and influenced a generation of rabbis who in their turn influenced communities and thus gave stability to this particular current in Judaism.*

* Some remarks must be added on the conception of Jewish nationalism by Frankel and his contemporaries. It by no means connotes the same meaning which it does today. It does not intend to include the pure secular characteristics of the present day concept, nor the practical counterpart of reestablishing a homeland. It was restricted to the idea that the Jews are conscious of being a distinct people entertaining hope for a future national life in their own land. While this is a legitimate view of Jewish nationalism its holders would object to be considered a separate group from a legal point of view in the countries where they reside. When such a

68. SOLOMON JUDAH RAPOPORT

To the Protagonists of the movement, designated by us as Conservatism, can also be counted the famous scholar and one of the prominent founders of Jewish learning in the last century, Solomon Judah Rapoport (1790-1868). His influence upon that movement and his participation in it, as far as it was expressed in life, were not as marked as that of Frankel, nor are his expressions on any necessary changes in religious practice of any definite character, but the general trend of his views and the nature of his literary activity place him within the group who championed a certain adjustment of Judaism, whether in thought or practice, to the intellectual and spiritual conditions of modern times.

Solomon Judah Rapoport was born in Lemberg, one of the leading Jewish communities in Galicia. He was trained like the other Jewish children of that time in the Heder and Yeshibah, and due to his exceptional abilities, especially his remarkable memory, he was distinguished by his great mastery of the Talmud and Rabbinics. Through some hidden means, he also succeeded in acquiring considerable secular knowledge and became conversant with the German and French languages. This fact, however, was not generally known in his immediate circle, and his fame rested primarily on his Talmudic scholarship. It was due to that, that one of the leading Talmudists of the day, Rabbi Aryē Leib, the author of a famous Rabbinic work, *Keẓot ha-Hoshen*, saw fit to take him as his son-in-law. In accordance with the custom of the time, he was supported by his father for several years after his marriage, which time he utilized in increasing his knowledge of languages and in research of historical sources. When the support ceased, he was engaged as manager of a company which farmed the tax on Kosher meat from the government. In spite of his being occupied daily in an unpleasant task, he devoted much time to study and soon made his literary debut in the annual *Bikkurē ha-Ittim* (Sec. 25), with a translation of a part of Schiller's poem, *Die Glocke*. This was followed by more poems and articles. He soon became active in the spreading of Haskalah in the city of

proposition was offered by King Friedrich Wilhelm IV, namely, to give the Jews in Prussia special national rights but not civil equality, Frankel rightly objected to it. In this case, the term "National" conveyed exclusion from the body politic of the state, and consequently he termed this type of nationalism objectionable, since it was forced upon the Jews. There is, therefore, no ground to Dr. Bernfeld's assertion that Frankel denied Jewish nationalism in life and only wanted to retain it in the prayers. See Bernfeld, *Toldot ha-Reformazion ha-Datit be-Yisrael*, p. 167ff, and S. P. Rabinowitz, *Rabbi Zechariah Frankel*, Warsaw, 1898, pp. 307-310.

Lemberg. Together with the satirist, Isaac Erter, he formed a circle for young men, students of the Yeshibah, where they were guided in acquiring a knowledge of the Hebrew language, of the sciences, as well as a broader view of Jewish studies. This activity aroused the animosity of the Hassidim and the leaders of Orthodoxy in the city, and as a result the members of the circle began to be persecuted. Rapoport, on account of his great Talmudic knowledge, was especially singled out for persecution, and in the year 1817 an official ban (*Herem*) was proclaimed against him and his friends in the form of a letter posted on the synagogue door. The letter was not signed by the rabbi of the city but merely written in his name. He was later forced by the government to rescind it publicly, but the animosity and the persecution did not cease.

Still, in spite of his tribulations, Rapoport kept assiduously at his studies and with exceptional zeal and diligence gathered knowledge from all sources. Soon he began to share his knowledge with those who sought it. In the year 1829, he published in the same annual his first biography, that of Saadia Gaon, which immediately attracted the attention of the scholarly world. This was followed by five more, those of Nathan, the author of the *Aruk* (Vol. I, Sec. 148), Hai Gaon, Eliezer Kalir, Rabbi Hannanel, and Nisim Gaon (Vol. I, Secs. 135, 137). These biographies or rather monographs placed Rapoport in the first rank of scholars, for they displayed not only a vast amount of erudition in all branches of Jewish literature, but also a rare critical acumen, and he thus became the founder of a new method in the research of Jewish history and literature. As soon as the first biography appeared, Jewish scholars began to correspond with Rapoport in order to obtain his opinion on many knotty problems in all departments of Jewish learning. This learned correspondence resulted in several volumes of collected letters which are important contributions to various fields of Jewish learning. Many were the friends of this Polish scholar, but those who exerted most influence upon him were two, Nahman Krochmal who lived in Zolkiew, only three miles from Lemberg, and Samuel David Luzzatto. With the first, he spent thirty years in almost daily discussion and learned conversation, and with the second he corresponded for an equal number of years. The correspondence of the two savants fills a number of volumes. As a result of these activities, the name of the manager of the Kosher tax at Lemberg spread, within a number of years, to all countries and he became the center of Jewish scholarship.

Yet, the great fame which Rapoport attained in the early thirties of the last century* did not bring him happiness. On the contrary, it increased his misery. His enemies from the camp of the Hassidim and the rigorously pious continued to persecute him and even attempted several times to take his position away from him and finally succeeded. For a time several leading Maskilim of Brody came to his assistance and created for him a temporary position in that city. Under such circumstances, Rapoport turned to his friends and asked them to obtain for him a Rabbinical post in one of the Jewish communities in Galicia, Hungary, Bohemia, or Germany.

At that time, there occurred a vacancy in the Rabbinate in Tarnopol, the third leading Jewish community in Galicia, and through the influence of Joseph Perl (Sec. 30), a friend of Rapoport, he was called, in the year 1837, to fill it. However, this event, which for a moment our scholar thought a happy one, proved a great disappointment. The election was in reality forced upon the community by Perl and his friends; the great majority of the members did not approve of Rapoport who was accused by his enemies as unorthodox. His stay there for three years was a period of agony and misery. His enemies employed all means to embitter his life, even spreading false rumors about his personal conduct. In addition, he was also attacked, mostly from motives of jealousy by literary critics, who, in the manner of the time, injected in the criticism a strong note of animosity. Fortunately for our savant, he was relieved from his unbearable situation by his election, in the year 1840, to the post of senior dayyan at Prague, in Bohemia. This position was obtained for him by his numerous friends in the scholarly world after much exertion and endeavor, and during the negotiations which were protracted for many months, Rapoport had to humiliate himself and appeal for assistance to people who were unfriendly to him because he had once criticized their works unfavorably.

At Prague, our scholar spent the last twenty-eight years of his life in comparative rest. But his daily occupation with communal affairs incumbent upon him as the spiritual leader of an old and large Jewish community slackened his literary activity, and this brilliant scholar did not realize all the expectations of his friends. During the years following the publication of his biographies, Rapoport wrote many

* As proof of the great influence of Rapoport on the scholarly world can serve us the fact that Zunz in his *Gottesdienstliche Vorträge* published in 1832, three years after the appearance of Rapoport's first biographical essay, quotes him 110 times.

articles and essays in periodicals and also several introductions to books written by others besides the large number of learned epistles spoken of above.

Frequently he referred in his essays to two works which he was about to publish, an encyclopaedic dictionary on Jewish subjects and a number of volumes of biographies of all great men in Israel. Of the dictionary or rather encyclopaedia there appeared the first volume containing the letter *Aleph*. The book is a veritable mine of Jewish knowledge, and the erudition displayed there is enormous. However, no more volumes appeared, nor was any part of the other work ever published, except for some biographies in the first volume of the encyclopaedia. This was the price which Jewish scholarship paid for Rapoport's economic insecurity.

Rapoport, like many other Jewish scholars, was no philosopher and he, therefore, did not elaborate his views on Judaism in a logical manner, and we must glean them from scattered remarks in his works. There can, of course, be no question as to the loyalty of a man of his type to the law and to Jewish nationhood. He lived all his life in strict observance of the law, and the adherence of the Jews to their nationhood in the future was considered by him an axiom. He constantly reiterates the necessity of inculcating the love of the Jewish nation in the hearts of all the Jews, saying, "Love of the entire nation is the very corner-stone in our striving for the continued existence of the Jewish people and the surest guarantee for its greatness. It is the very foundation of the Jewish religion upon which it can rest secure forever."¹⁹ To him, as to many other devoted Jews, nationalism and religion are interwoven in Judaism and no separation can be effected. He did not enter into an analysis of the national spirit in order to find its characteristics, for in his opinion, it consists primarily in the form of a datum of the consciousness of all the Jews of the world, that they are one in their conduct towards God and man. There were, he adds, differences in particulars of that conduct among the scattered groups, but never in fundamentals. It is only in modern times that such divergence is revealed, and this constitutes, in his opinion, the great danger to Judaism and is a result of the weakening among the Jews of the feeling of love for the nation.²⁰

This love for the nation which the scholar advocated was not supposed to be a blind one which sanctions all that the masses accepted

¹⁹ Introduction to the Translation of Racine's Drama, Esther, *Bikkurê ha-'Itim*, 1828.

²⁰ Ibid.

as holy and sacred; and we should not close our eyes to the defects in such conduct, nor refrain from adjusting the life of the people to conditions of the time. Like all the Maskilim of his generation, he believed that the increase of general knowledge among the Jews is a duty which every loyal son of Israel should set for himself. It, says he, will raise their prestige among the nations; and not only that, but by assimilating the spiritual good found in every nation, they will strengthen their own pure faith and they will thus deserve the title "A wise and understanding nation," given to them by the Bible.²¹ These are not mere phrases, but express Rapoport's view which he defended vigorously against the opinions of his friend, Samuel David Luzzatto, who combated the rationalistic current in Judaism. Our scholar was, to a great extent, a rationalist, and with his critical acumen he discerned many things in Jewish life of the past, with the traditional explanation of which he could not agree. He believed, therefore, in the right of freedom of research and discussion, and though he was very conservative even in his historical and literary studies, yet he propounded many theories which the strictly orthodox Jews could not accept. Even his friend Luzzatto remonstrated with him vigorously. Rapoport, however, seemed to have drawn a line between theory and practice for no flaw was found in his conduct, yet he was always under suspicion from both sides. Those from the right did not believe his orthodoxy, and those from the left, even his former friends, accused him of hypocrisy at the time he attacked the Reform movement and its leaders, especially Geiger.

That both sides were wrong there is no doubt. Rapoport possessed a deep religious feeling which grew in strength as he grew older, and hence his vigorous strife against the Reform movement. He sent a letter to the Rabbinical Conference at Frankfort in which he appealed to them not to make a breach in the House of Israel, and not to remove the mention of the Jewish future from the prayer book, for in doing so, they cut themselves loose from the Jewish past. He was especially severe with Geiger who was his friend in former years for his radical views of the Pentateuch. He attacked him bitterly in a special review of the latter's work *Urschrift* where he not only finds justifiable flaws in his theories, but denounces him in undignified terms. He returned to his attacks on Geiger again and again. In one of his letters to Luzzatto, he says, "Geiger has no share in the God of Israel," and even goes out of his way when writing a learned

²¹ *Kerem Hemed*, Vol. I.

introduction to Freimann's edition of Abraham bar Ḥiyya's book, *Hegyon ha-Nefesh* (Vol. I, Sec. 177), to deliver a vitriolic statement against Geiger.²²

In spite of such vehemence against the Reform movement, Rapoport by no means agreed with the neo-Orthodox of the type of Samson Raphael Hirsch. When Hirsch attacked Frankel for his somewhat liberal views about the origin of the Halakah contained in his introduction to the Mishnah, Rapoport defended him zealously in a special pamphlet. Undoubtedly he agreed with the leader of the Conservative movement in the necessity of making some slight changes in the practice of Judaism, but the opportunity never occurred for the two to elaborate any such program. Rapoport can thus safely be placed as a right conservative.

NEO-ORTHODOXY

69. SAMUEL DAVID LUZZATTO

The line between the Conservative movement and that of neo-Orthodoxy can not be drawn fast. The former, as stated, consists of several phases, the extreme right of which approaches Orthodoxy very closely and yet the distinction is not totally obliterated. The distinction, however, cannot be accurately defined, for it very seldom consists in a demand for particular changes but primarily in the general attitude towards Judaism and in the emphasis placed upon certain points in that attitude. It becomes, therefore, difficult to determine with precision the place of a man of an outstanding Jewish personality, who lived and acted during the last century, within the various movements at the time. This difficulty presents itself especially in the case of Samuel David Luzzatto, (1800-1866), the great scholar and most typical Jew of the entire century. That he was orthodox both in his religious practices and in his beliefs there is no doubt, yet his orthodoxy possessed a peculiar flavor and can by no means be identified either with the ordinary old type or with the neo-Orthodoxy of the German type. This, however, does not in any way impair its genuineness nor its nobility. His views can quite safely be presented as those of a thinking, deep-feeling, modern orthodox Jew.

Luzzatto was born in Trieste, where his father Ḥiskiah, though a scion of a noble family, famous in the annals of Jewish learning,

²² Rapoport's collected letters p. 218; Intro. to *Hegyon ha-Nefesh* ed. Freimann, Leipzig, 1860, p. XXXVII.

engaged in carpentry as a means of earning a livelihood. He was, however, a scholarly man, interested both in Jewish and secular studies. Young Luzzatto's studies were, therefore, not limited to Jewish subjects but included languages and the sciences. He began to attend the elementary private Hebrew school at the age of three, and at four and a half he entered the Talmud Torah where the greater part of the day was devoted to Jewish and a few hours to secular subjects. His main education, however, he obtained through his own efforts. He had even, when a mere boy, a particular inclination and love for the Hebrew language, its grammar, and the Bible, and at fourteen he had already outlined for himself a program of literary activity in these subjects, the greater part of which he actually carried out in his lifetime. Luzzatto was endowed both with a special linguistic sense and with a deep poetic feeling. His first literary attempts were, therefore, in these two branches, and soon he became famous as a poet and scholar in his native city, and when Isaac Samuel Reggio, the rabbi of Gorizia, came, in 1868, to Trieste, Luzzatto was introduced to him as a promising scholar and master of Hebrew. This event was of great consequence to the aspiring young man. It marked the beginning of a life-long friendship and a prolonged correspondence between the two scholars.

In 1820 Luzzatto married the daughter of Raphael Baruch Segera, one of the leading members of the Trieste Jewish community and a man of great learning. He continued his studies even after his marriage in spite of the fact that he was without a secure means for earning a livelihood. Fortunately for him, he was appointed, through the influence of his friend Reggio, in the year 1820, as professor of Bible, Jewish history, and theology at the newly opened Rabbinical Seminary at Padua, whither he removed with his family. In that city, he resided until the end of his life, and for thirty-eight years, he was continually engaged in teaching his disciples the Bible, the Hebrew language, the principles of Judaism, and instilling in them undying love for the Jewish religion and the people of Israel. Many of his students later became rabbis in leading Jewish communities of Italy and applied the theories of their master to life.

The life of Luzzatto at Padua was a quiet one which enabled him to continue his studies and literary labors, but it was not without its vicissitudes. In 1841 his wife died after a prolonged illness which lasted for many years. He married her sister a few years later. In 1854 he lost his oldest son Philoxenus (Love of the Stranger, named

after his book *Oheb Ger* on the Targum Onkelos, as Onkelos or Aquila was a proselyte), a young man of great scholarly promise in whom Luzzatto saw his spiritual heir, and in 1862 his only daughter Miriam died at the age of eighteen. These bereavements inflicted deep wounds in the sensitive soul of Luzzatto, but he found comfort in his implicit trust in God, in his love of his religion and people, and especially in his literary activity. This activity, which lasted for forty years, without interruption, was very extensive and covered every branch of Jewish knowledge. The number of articles written in Hebrew as well as in four European languages run into the hundreds, and the number of books into scores. The most important are: the *Oheb Ger* on the Onkelos translation of the Bible; *Bet ha-Oẓar* (Treasure-House), studies in Hebrew synonyms in three parts; *ha-Mishtadel*, comments on the Pentateuch and commentaries on Isaiah and other Prophets; *Peninē Shadal* (Gems of S. D. Luzzatto), collected essays in Hebrew; *Yesodē ha-Torah* (On the Principles and Nature of the Jewish Religion); *Iggrot Shadal* (Collected letters) in five parts; and the *Kinor Naim* (Sweet Harp), collected poems. Besides, he translated a great part of the Old Testament into Italian and wrote a Hebrew grammar in that language. The greatest contribution of Luzzatto, though, was his own personality which is expressed primarily in his views on Judaism.

As a starting point in the presentation of Luzzatto's views on Judaism in particular and his world view in general, we must take his attitude towards philosophy. He was, by nature, antagonistic to metaphysics. The metaphysicians, he claims, did not contribute much towards human progress, for there is hardly any agreement among them; what one establishes the other destroys, and what one posits the other refutes. After centuries of philosophizing and after thousands of books had been written on the subject, we do not find concurrence among philosophers even on one subject. However, it is not because of mere uncertainty and lack of harmony among thinkers that he rejected philosophical reasoning, but his antipathy to abstract thought is based on a deeper motive. He belongs to those philosophers to whom the life of man, both as an individual and as a member in society forms the measure of value of all things. Whatever tends to ennoble and elevate that life is good and useful, and whatever does not add to its improvement is valueless. Hence, his opposition to abstract philosophy which he called Atticism, on account of its Greek or Attic origin. This phi-

losophy, he asserts, might have developed the human mind and made it more keen but contributed little to the betterment of human life. That can be accomplished only by the cultivation of the goodness of the heart. Greek philosophy, says Luzzatto, the spirit of which is still rampant today, not only does not make its followers wiser and better but even destroys their natural joy in life and turns them into pessimists.²³ As a proof for his thesis he adduces illustrations from the social situation in his time. He asks, was there ever a time when innovations in all fields of science were as numerous and as great as in our generation? And yet, were wars, robbery, theft, oppression and poverty diminished by these inventions? The way to human happiness lies, therefore, not in the teachings of Atticism, but in a different direction, namely, in that of the second great force in human civilization, which is Judaism. Judaism, says he, both Biblical and Talmudic, possesses the power to found a society on righteousness which will attain happiness. Philosophy, or the civilization impregnated by its spirit, is unable to accomplish that. This civilization is motivated by calculation of means to ends, and actions are dominated by a spirit of accounting and reckoning; and when the mind calculates, the feeling heart ceases its activity. Judaism, on the other hand, speaks to the heart and commands the performance of actions even if they are opposed to all utilitarian reckoning.²⁴

What then is this Judaism which under favorable circumstances can become such a positive force in the spiritual development of humanity? To this question Luzzatto gives the following answer. Judaism or the religion of Israel did not begin with the law of Moses, but was the heritage of the Jews from the patriarchs, especially from Abraham. At times, he calls the first phase Abrahamism. Moses did not find it necessary to explain the essence of that religion as it was known to the people of his time. He did, however, give us a summary of its principles in the stories of the lives of the patriarchs. From these we learn that the founders of the Jewish nation believed in one God who, being a just judge of the world, rewards the righteous and punishes the wicked. They also believed in miracles and prophecy. The selection of Abraham and his seed was not for their own sake, but for the purpose that they become the ancestors of a holy people, and in order to keep them distinct

²³ *Mehkeré ha-Yahadus* (Studies in Judaism) p. 244.

²⁴ Italian letters of Luzzatto, published in a Hebrew translation, in the *ha-Pardēs*. Vol. III, p. 103.

and separate, God enjoined upon Abraham and his descendants the sign of circumcision.* Luzzatto likewise emphasizes that the selection of Israel was not for their own sake but for the benefit of all nations, as the prophets repeatedly taught. He believes that this divine purpose is gradually being realized through the generations. His evidence for that realization is the spread of Christianity, the daughter of Judaism, which detracted the nations from paganism.²⁵ This then is the essence of Abrahamism, the first phase of Judaism, which already contained the real characteristics of Judaism as a whole—belief in one God, His providence, reward and punishment, the doing of good, and the idea of the selection of Israel as a people destined to be exemplary in its conduct to all nations.

Mosaism, or the giving of the Torah on Sinai, came at the time when the small family became a people and God saw that they needed teachings, laws, and a way of training for life. The Torah was given for the purpose of improvement of conduct, both of the individual and society, and for the perpetuation of religion. Three means were chosen by God for the realization of the two aims, and these constitute the fundamentals of Judaism.

The first fundamental is pity or mercy. Luzzatto believes that this feeling is inherent in the human heart and that it is the source of all human love and kindness. But as all feelings, it needs constant nourishment and strengthening. The difference in human conduct arises from the various degrees of development of that elemental emotion in the hearts of men. The only way to train a child in the right path is to educate him in such a manner that the feeling of mercy and sympathy with his fellow-man should become a habit, and the same is true of a nation. The Torah contains so many precepts which aim to foster that feeling of mercy to such a degree as to make it dominant in the heart of the Jews.

However, great and potent as this principle is as a means for right conduct, it alone would not have been sufficient to keep man in the right path. The Torah enunciates, therefore, a second principle which aims both at the improvement of conduct and at preservation of religion and that is the promise of reward and punishment

* Luzzatto was quite aware that circumcision was practiced by the Egyptians. He claims that with them only the priests were circumcised, while with the Jews all males are obliged to undergo circumcision. Besides, this fact by no means detracts from the importance of the sign as one of distinction and separation, especially since according to the Torah, it was an express command of God and it was intended as a symbol of a covenant between God and Israel.

²⁵ *Mehkeré ha-Yahadut*, pt. 1, p. 10, note 2.

which is constantly referred to in the Pentateuch. This covers all precepts both of a purely ethical and a purely religious nature. To this is added the principle of the belief in the election of Israel as a people of special spiritual merit and that God made a covenant with their ancestors which will never be abrogated. This principle, like the former, aims at both the elevation of the moral status of the Jews and the perpetuation of their religion. Luzzatto is very careful to enunciate this last principle and differentiate it from plain chauvinism. It does by no means imply, says he, a lower esteem of other nations. On the contrary, Judaism considers all men as children of God, but it merely connotes a specialization along the lines of ethical and religious conduct, namely that all Jews are to be as distinct and separate as the priests among other nations. This distinctness of spirituality can be kept up only by the observance of the many commandments and precepts of the law. It is the daily observance which brings the Jew nearer to God and prepares him for that spiritual state which he was intended to attain.

Luzzatto devotes much space to the explanation of the various precepts. His general tendency is to show that all of them possess an educational value and are intended to train the Jews along the lines aimed at by these three principles. His explanations are very dexterous and skilful, but in spite of his antagonism to rationalism and his evident attempt to deviate from those offered by Maimonides in his *Guide*, he does not escape that trend altogether. There is a special effort made by him in these explanations to emphasize the intent of the precepts to be the promotion of the national welfare and the distinction of the group rather than the spiritual elevation of the individual. This constitutes an essential difference between his explanations and those of Maimonides.

From all what has been said, we can see that not only has Luzzatto a positive attitude towards the law, but that he lays great emphasis upon the observance of the precepts, making it the very basis of Judaism, for from his point of view mere belief in dogmas is of little consequence and the thing that matters is right action, both moral and religious.

However, while he opposed dogmatism in Judaism and had taken Maimonides to task for his attempt to establish the Thirteen Articles of Faith, he lays down one dogma which he insists every Jew must accept, that is the belief in revelation of the Torah (Torah Min ha-Shamayyim). The importance of this principle consists though

not in being a principle of belief but in its practical value, for it involves the obligation to observe the precepts since they were expressly commanded by God. He says explicitly, "The great principle of Judaism is nothing but the belief in revelation and the acceptance of the burden of the *Mizvot*."²⁶ He adds that the belief in one God is, of course, a dogma, but it is already included in the principle of revelation, for the Torah states clearly that God is one.

He admits that some other dogmas are implied in the Torah, yet he allows much latitude to scholars and thinkers in the matter of dogmatics, and avers that no one who differs in the conception of some dogmas from the one accepted by the majority of the Jewish people, can be called a heretic, thus opposing Maimonides who wanted to narrow down Jewish belief to his Thirteen Articles. As proof for his assertion, he cites the fact that though Gersonides believed in creation from primal matter and Hasdai Crescas had practically denied freedom of the will (Vol. II, Secs. 78, 79), none ever dared doubt their piety and loyalty to Judaism. Since Luzzatto took such an attitude even towards important matters like dogmas, there is small wonder that he allowed himself freedom of research and difference of opinion in his scholarly activities from those accepted by rigid Orthodoxy. Thus he wrote a long treatise against the Kabbala where he not only proved the late date of the *Zohar*, but also opposed the teachings of mysticism, stamping them as foreign to Judaism. In his Biblical studies, he ventured to offer a number of emendations in the texts of the Prophets and of the Hagiographa, and championed a later date for Ecclesiastes, rejecting the traditional view that it is the work of Solomon. In general, he was so saturated with the spirit of truth and so deeply conscious of his loyalty to and love for the Jewish religion that he did not hesitate to assert what he considered true even if it did not agree with the accepted tradition.

He was careful, though, both in making his emendations and in his assertions not to undermine any belief accepted by the nation as a whole for generations, and, in such cases, he defended the traditional view vigorously against all, even against the opinions of his best friends. In regard to emendations, he drew the line at the Pentateuch and never dared to alter a single letter in that text. He insisted upon the unity of the Book of Isaiah, refusing to acknowledge the view that the second part, from chapter forty to the end, was written by an exilic prophet, a view taught almost unanimously

²⁶ Ibid., Pt. II, p. 19.

by all Biblical scholars in the last century. He, like all these scholars, saw the difficulties in accepting the unity of the Book, but he saw in the theory of a second Isaiah a slur upon the honor of the Jewish people. How, says he, is it possible that a late prophet could pass his prophecies as having emanated from Isaiah and thus deceive the entire nation? Again, how is it possible that all Israel drew comfort for two thousand years from a book which was produced with intent to deceive?²⁷

Luzzatto's emphasis upon the honor of the nation reveals to us another fundamental characteristic in his views of Judaism, and that is his nationalism. We have already seen how with him religion and nationalism are so harmoniously united. The whole purpose of the Torah with its many precepts and commandments was given only for the perpetuation and preservation of the Jews as a distinct and separate nation. But the national existence of the Jew was to him even more than that. It was an end in itself and he was permeated by the desire to devote his life to the purpose of increasing the national pride and glorify the name of Israel. This desire was the leading motive in his literary activity during half a century. He tells us in one of his writings that for a time he was deeply engaged in the study of dogmatic theology with the desire to elucidate the principles of Judaism, but he then turned to Biblical exegesis and the science of Hebrew grammar with the sole purpose of understanding the Bible properly and be equipped to defend the spirit of Israel and its particular nationalism. Even his great interest in Hebrew grammar rose from a desire to excel Gesenius in the knowledge of Hebrew, for he considered it an insult to the national name that such mastery of Hebrew should be the share of a non-Jew. He concludes by assuring his readers that his entire scientific activity has no other motive but to enlighten the generation in the knowledge of Jewish history and literature and thus increase the national pride.²⁸

His view that the Torah was given for the purpose of preserving the distinctness of the Jewish people, and that Judaism is that force in human civilization which aims primarily at the cultivation of the qualities of the heart in contradistinction to Atticism, the fruit of cold reason, caused him to become a zealous champion of the originality of the Jewish spirit. In spite of the fact that he himself was a Sephardic Jew and that he spent years in commenting upon and

²⁷ Ibid., Pt. II, p. 44.

²⁸ Epilogue to his *Kinor Naim* (collected poems).

editing the poems of the Spanish-Jewish poets of the Golden Age, he preferred the literary activity of the Franco-German Jews during the Middle Ages to those of the Spanish. He saw in the former a more genuine expression of the original Jewish spirit, while in the rationalism of the Spanish-Jewish philosophers he discerned an unsuccessful attempt to compromise between Atticism and Judaism, for, in his opinion, there can be no real peace between the two. Attic philosophy emphasizes such knowledge and ethics which result in the aggrandizement of the ego, while Judaism teaches such knowledge and ethics the purport of which is altruism, humility, and the fear of the Lord.

It is the zeal for the preservation of the original characteristics of the Jewish spirit which prompted Luzzatto to oppose the teachings even of the greatest representatives of the Mediaeval Spanish Jewry, such as Maimonides and Abraham Ibn Ezra. He saw in the former's glorification of the intellect a tendency foreign to Judaism and one detrimental in its results. As results of such a nature are considered by Luzzatto Maimonides' views of the human soul, namely that its perfection consists in the development of pure thought, and that only the pure thoughts of man remain immortal while the soul itself perishes. To our thinker, to whom the excellence of the soul consists primarily in the will to do good deeds and who considered the entire soul immortal, such views seemed objectionable. Equally unacceptable and erroneous was another view of Maimonides, namely that divine providence is distributed in proportion to human excellence of intellect and that the more intellectual man receives the greater share of providence. This advantage of the intellectual aristocracy was in Luzzatto's opinion antagonistic to the essence of Judaism which considers every man alike in the eyes of God. Nor was he satisfied with Maimonides' theory of ethics which adopts the Golden Mean as the proper way of life. This, he says, is not the way of Abraham and of Judaism. Their way is not based on proportion and calculation, but on love, kindness, altruism and doing the will of God.²⁹ Even the Code of Maimonides, that great masterpiece of system and legal tradition, did not find favor with him. He found fault not with the work itself but with the intention to decide the law for all time without pointing out the sources nor giving reasons for such decision. To Luzzatto, this assumption of final authority was a result of philosophy which relies upon reason

²⁹ Introduction to *Meẖkerē ha-Yahadut*, p. VII, and Pt. I, p. 9.

and is proud of its ability.⁸⁰ He preferred the humbleness and simplicity of the Franco-German scholars, and loved especially Rashi in whom these qualities were exemplified par excellence.

Similarly, he was displeased with Ibn Ezra for his desire to follow philosophical explanations in his commentaries on the Bible and his attempt to inject foreign thoughts in the meaning of the verses. He especially disliked him for his dissimulation, posing as a pious and believing Jew, while in the many hints he dropped and his cryptic expressions he meant to convey critical and untraditional views. He compared him with Rashi and found him much inferior to this great traditional commentator.

The target of his full antagonism to the supremacy of reason and to the arrogance of philosophy was Spinoza. In the teachings of this philosopher, he saw the spirit of Atticism personified. In this philosopher's theories that God is identified with nature and that there is no freedom in the world but stern necessity, he saw the very opposite of what Judaism teaches. He was especially bitter against Spinoza's claim of supreme authority for reason and positing it as the guiding principle of human life, ignoring the feelings and the elemental emotions of man. The ethics of that philosopher, says Luzzatto, which are based on self-preservation and personal utility guided by reason and which declare pity a weakness of women and fools, not only do not lead to good deeds but really increase egoism and foster the cultivation of evil traits of character. So great was Luzzatto's wrath against Spinoza that he wondered how it happened that the philosopher himself led a life of justice and righteousness. He solved the puzzle by asserting that it was partly due to the heritage of character from his parents and to the Jewish training he received and partly to his love for the Hebrew language. The last part of the explanation is indeed very characteristic and quite appropriate for Luzzatto whose love for the Holy Tongue was unbounded.

It is needless to say that a man who held such views as Luzzatto did was strenuously opposed to the Reform movement of his time. Yet some of his utterances on the subject are worthwhile noting as they reveal more of his own thoughts. In a letter to the historian Jost, he says, "How long will you German-Jewish savants follow the populace and allow the national pride to disappear, the language of our fathers to be forgotten, and the spirit of Atticism to rise

⁸⁰ Ibid., Pt. II, pp. 179-183.

among our brethren? When will God give you strength to teach our brethren that the salvation of the Jews does not lie in emancipation but in brotherly love and in uniting together like children of one family."³¹ He satirizes the mission theory of the champions of the Reform movement and proves it baseless. We cannot, he says, assert that monotheism is the essence of Judaism, for that includes also the observance of the precepts. Besides, he continues, why say that this belief is the share of the Jews only? All modern nations believe in one God and we have no right to minimize their belief. In addition, this hope of teaching the nations has no foundation in reality. The Bible has been the property of civilized humanity for eighteen hundred years and if its teachings did not thus far improve society what more can the Jews accomplish? Judaism, proclaims Luzzatto, certainly needs no reason for its existence, such as the mission theory. It has existed and will exist as long as the Jews will believe in the revelation of their Torah and observe it because it is their duty to do so.³²

Thus did this great Jew believe in the Torah, love his people, and devote a life time to the dissemination of his teachings. He was orthodox no doubt, but of the liberal type with no tinge of zealotism in him. He was pious indeed, but his piety was tempered by love of truth and respect for tolerance. With all his opposition to the views of Jost, Geiger, and Schorr, he did not cease to correspond with them and call them friends and colleagues. He rejected what he deemed false in their studies but respected and admired them for the truth he found in their writings.

70. SAMSON RAPHAEL HIRSCH

Luzzatto's views undoubtedly represent, in spite of their slight deviations from the standard form, a high and noble type of Jewish orthodoxy. Yet, due to his distance from Germany, the battlefield of the religious views, opinions, and actions, they hardly exerted any influence upon the Jews of Western Europe. It became evident that if Orthodoxy was to withstand the storm of attacks from all sides, it must have new leaders of a type entirely different from the old guardians of religion who rejected all compromise with the new spirit of the time, men who should be equipped with all the

³¹ *Iggrot Shadal*, p. 160.

³² *Mehkerê ha-Yahadut*, Pt. II, pp. 25, 29.

weapons of a modern education, and yet be imbued with deep love and loyalty to the traditions of old. But before a generation of such leaders could arise, there was need of one leader who could resuscitate the decaying orthodox type of Judaism in Germany, regenerate it, and endow it with new power. Fortunately, such a man was found in the person of Samson Raphael Hirsch (1808-1888). It was he who, by his unbounded love for the old type of Judaism joined with a thorough Jewish and secular education, by his indefatigable energy and above all by his remarkable almost saintly personality, saved Orthodoxy from extinction. When he first entered upon his Rabbinical duties, confusion reigned in the camp of the faithful. They looked with dismay at the process of destruction going on in their midst. Community after community was swept by the spirit of reform and forsook the ways of their fathers. The old leaders were helpless and spent their wrath in protests and denunciations. Hirsch came and gathered around him scattered forces, and after forty years of labor he left a small but a compact party of orthodox Jews who were well equipped to continue their way of life in a modern environment.

Hirsch was born in Hamburg. His father, a merchant of modest means, gave him a thorough Jewish education, but also introduced him to secular studies. He was imbued from his early childhood with a deep religiosity and later he came under the influence of Dr. Bernays, the rabbi of the orthodox community of his native city. Bernays was a queer and eccentric personality and his philosophy of Judaism was full of mystic vagaries, some of which were contrary and foreign to the true Jewish spirit. In practical life, however, he was a zealous Orthodox and defended the true faith in its entirety without conceding an iota. He encouraged young Hirsch to devote his life to the rehabilitation of Orthodoxy.

With this purpose in mind, Hirsch entered the university at Bonn where, as we have seen, he spent a number of years in company with Geiger and several other students who were preparing themselves for the Jewish ministry. His capacity for leadership was evident even then, for he exercised profound influence over his companions in spite of the difference in their religious opinions. While at the university he applied himself assiduously to his secular studies, especially to the classical languages, but did not neglect his Talmud. As noted above, he induced even Geiger to study together with him several Talmudic tractates. He graduated from the uni-

versity in 1830, at the age of twenty-two and immediately accepted a position as district rabbi at Oldenburg.

In 1836 he published his "Nineteen Letters of Ben Uziel," where he first expounded his conception of Judaism. The book made a great impression in Germany, as it was written with skill and was permeated with the warm glow of sincere emotion. It was the first powerful defense of the traditional type of Judaism launched in a world which was either hostile or indifferent to it. It swayed many perplexed young men who were on the crossroads, wavering between their allegiance to the form of Judaism in which they were trained and the allurements of the new type championed by the reformers, to remain loyal to the former. Among such young men was also Graetz, who on reading the letters, applied to Hirsch to enroll him as one of his disciples, and, on receiving a favorable reply, came to Oldenburg and studied under him for several years.

Two years later, Hirsch published his *Horeb* in three parts where he explains systematically, in accordance with his principles, all the commandments of the Torah and endeavors to unfold their inner moral and religious meanings. His fame spread throughout Germany as a vigorous champion of tradition and he was soon called to the position of district rabbi at Emden where he spent a number of years. In 1851 he was called to become the spiritual leader of the small orthodox congregation at Frankfort on the Main which at the time initiated the separatist movement in German Jewish communities. The arrival of Hirsch strengthened the dissenters and it did not take long and this orthodox congregation numbered its members in the hundreds, and finding a wide field for his activity, he devoted himself to his work with great energy and succeeded in all his endeavors. He secured the permission of the government to organize a new orthodox community, established a parochial high school where Jewish and secular subjects were taught in an extremely religious spirit but in the most modern way, and published a German weekly entitled *Yeshurun* for the propagation of his ideas. The results of his indefatigable labor for thirty-seven years were a solidly organized orthodox community, several schools and a young generation that grew up under his guidance, modern in their education but zealously religious. His influence spread also to many cities, and, on his death, he left a revived Orthodox party in Germany, which though small in numbers was possessed of great vitality.

The fundamental element in Hirsch's conception of the Jewish

religion is similar to that of Luzzatto's which is that the belief in the revealed character of the Torah must be accepted as a *conditio sine qua non* for the right understanding of Judaism. His argument is that Judaism is a historical phenomenon and, as all such phenomena, it must be conceived in accordance with its own sources, i.e. the Torah, and from its own point of view.³³

Analyzing the point of view of the Torah, he finds that it conceives the world through God, namely that it was created by Him for the purpose of service. Upon examining the world, he says, we note that it really does fulfill that purpose, for there is interdependence among all its parts, and one part serves another. Receiving and giving service is then the principle of the universe. Consequently, man who is the highest being in this world and receives more than any other being, has also the highest duty to serve the world, his fellow men, and primarily God. In this duty and service to the divine lies his real freedom, for it emancipates him from his slavery to passion.³⁴

To fulfill this special function there was chosen, out of all mankind, one particular nation which was destined to declare through its history and life the sacred duty of man to serve God. That people is Israel. By the revelation given to it at Sinai, it was commanded to make the will of God its only aim in life, and to proclaim to the world great truths, namely that there is one God who is the creator, judge, law giver, and father of all beings. This mission imposes upon it also a sacred duty, that of ethical and spiritual isolation, which is accomplished by the entire complex of the laws, precepts, and commandments contained in the Torah. The reason for the selection of this people, Hirsch finds, like Luzzatto, in the character of its ancestor Abraham. It was he who embodied in his own personality the ideals which this nation was destined to realize. These ideals are three in number: *Ahabah* (love), *Emunah* (faith), and *Yyirah* (fear). Abraham displayed in his activities unbounded love of God, faith and trust in Him, and true fear of the Lord. These traits of Abraham were laid down for the Jews as the principles of their life. Nothing else matters but the Torah. It was given to the Jews in the wilderness as a sign that their nationhood does not depend on land or soil but on the Torah alone which is the soul

³³ "Nineteen Letters," Eng. trans. Letter II.

³⁴ Ibid., Letters III, IV.

of that peculiar people.³⁵ The Torah is above all in Jewish life; but what is the nature of the Torah? In answer to this question, Hirsch agrees partly with Mendelssohn that the Torah was not intended to inculcate eternal verities or philosophical truths. Unity of God, immortality, providence, all these are general human truths and the Torah instead of commanding to believe in these truths and emphasizing their importance had assumed them as accepted by the people. It emphasizes primarily the observance of the law in all its phases. It is this observance which, according to Hirsch, is the very essence of Judaism, for these laws were intended to train the Jew for his destiny. The "Man of Israel" (he uses a peculiar expression, *Yisrael-Mensch*) is in his opinion the highest and most complete type of man.—Hirsch never forgets to emphasize the value of Judaism for humanity as a whole.—He becomes so through the severe training which the laws impose upon him, for their purpose is to introduce morality and justice not only among the Jews but among men in general. Hence, every Jewish institution is also a stone in the moral edifice of humanity, and consequently, a Jew who observes the laws, ultimately becomes the ideal type of man. Briefly, he says, the belief in one God turns one from a mere higher type of animal into a man, but the observance of the laws turns him into a Jew. There is only one way to Judaism and that is the observance of the laws.

Hirsch does not really attempt to adduce proofs for his assertions for he is whole-heartedly convinced of their truth. He does, however, endeavor to support his statements by explanations of the purpose of the laws and by interpretation of their meaning. He devoted his book *Horeb* to this purpose, but a brief outline of his scheme is given in the "Nineteen Letters." According to this, he divided all the laws into six classes or groups, *Torot* (Doctrines), *Mishpatim* (Principles of Justice), *Hukkim* (Unmotivated Statutes), *Mitzvot* (Precepts), *Edot* (Symbolic Observances), and *Abodah* (Service).

The first embraces historically revealed doctrines concerning God, the world, the destiny of man, and the mission of Israel. The second contains laws of justice in relation to fellow-men. The third, though apparently arbitrary, yet, according to the author, aims to inculcate the observance of justice toward all creatures. The fourth class includes precepts of love towards all beings. The fifth group encompasses all such laws which convey a symbolic significance of

³⁵ Ibid., Letters, VII, VIII.

great ideas and concepts which tend to elevate and ennoble the life of man. Under the last class are subsumed all precepts which aim to exalt and sanctify human life and bring man in closer relation with God, such as prayer and similar forms of divine worship.⁸⁶

Hirsch finds as the underlying principles of all this mass of laws, the following three: justice, love of God, of man and of all other creatures, and education. Consequently, by scrupulous observance of them, the Jew attains nobility of character, freedom from passions, love of all beings, and trains himself for obedience to God, for dispensation of justice, and for a holy life, all of which characteristics make him an ideal man. Hence, his idealization of the "*Yisrael-Mensch*" which he placed as a goal to the young Jews of his generation.

This excessive emphasis of his upon the observance of the law and his constant insistence upon the complete separation and isolation of Jews did not, however, prevent him from being an ardent enthusiast of the emancipation in no less a degree than Geiger and Holdheim. This attitude is, to a certain degree, a direct consequence of this very emphasis on the law. To him, the Torah alone is the soul of the Jewish people and the very reason for its continued existence, and no other conditions are necessary. The loss of the Jewish state did not impair in any way the Jewish mission. The exile (Galut), according to him, serves a purpose, namely to improve and correct the Jewish people, and the very bitter struggle which the nation underwent during the years of suffering only strengthened its character. He, therefore, concludes that "Israel can accomplish his task in exile better than in a state of the full possession of good fortune."⁸⁷ Of course, as a strictly religious Jew, he believed in the coming of the Messiah and the ultimate gathering of the Jews from exile, since it was repeatedly promised by the prophets. This belief, though, does not in any way interfere with the desire for emancipation, for the coming of the Messiah is entirely dependent upon the will of God and the realization of the promise is relegated to an indefinite future time. For the present it is the duty of the Jews to unite with the states wherein they reside in as close a manner as possible. He accordingly hails the emancipation, which was in the offing at the time, with great jubilation and draws a glowing picture of the time of its realization.⁸⁸

In his enthusiasm, he overlooks the difficulties which an emancipated

⁸⁶ Ibid., Letters, X-XIII.

⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 82.

⁸⁸ Ibid., Letter XVI.

Jewry would have to meet in its endeavor to observe the law in its entirety. He is very optimistic and believes that the liberation of the Jew will only help the realization of the Jewish mission, inasmuch as the Jew, his mind saturated with the wisdom of the law, and practicing love and justice towards all in the midst of nations pursuing material gain and pleasure, will present a glorious spectacle. Hirsch is not entirely unaware of the possible danger of the influence of the general life upon the Jews but believes that a proper Jewish education would obviate it.

Judging the view of Judaism of this grand champion of rigid Orthodoxy as a whole, we can say, that in spite of the deep sincerity of the propounder and his love for and loyalty to tradition, it is found wanting. It is not the old type of Judaism which was followed by generations of Jews the world over. It differs from the latter in many points, not merely in the attempt to compromise with the external forms of modern life, but in real content. Unlike the older type, it minimizes the value of Jewish nationalism. To Hirsch, the national character of Israel is only of a spiritual nature,³⁹ a point of view which could easily be accepted by a moderate champion of Reform. To the Judaism as embodied in the Talmud and post-Talmudic literature, Jewish nationalism is a living principle active in daily life. To it, Palestine and the coming of the Messiah were not vague events relegated to an indefinite future, but exerted influence upon daily Jewish life. The Messiah was expected at any time, and the longing for redemption formed the warp and woof of the prayer book.

Again, in the Judaism of the past, there was equal emphasis laid upon the individual Jew and the nation as a whole, in fact the importance of the latter often overbalanced the former. In the neo-Orthodoxy of Hirsch, too much emphasis is laid upon the perfection of the individual Jew, and the nation is relegated to less than a secondary position. In spite of his speaking with love and a glow of emotion about the *Knesset Yisrael* (The Community of Israel), that term was mainly limited to those wholly faithful to the law, or as he calls them *Tora treue Juden*. His attitude towards the liberal Jews was far from friendly, and it was he who initiated the *trennungs politik*, the separation policy of the orthodox Jews in Germany. The policy is still adhered to by the followers of this type of Judaism even today, though of late it was somewhat modified.

³⁹ Ibid., p. 162.

Nor is the view of Hirsch in total harmony with the Judaism of the generations even in the conception of pure religion. To the Jew of old, the observance of the law was a natural phenomenon, a matter of course, without searching for reasons and making it a means for the eventual benefit of humanity. It is true that Hirsch laid great emphasis upon the obedience to the will of God, and considered all laws as expressions of his will. He even took issue with Maimonides for his attempt to offer rational explanations for the *Mizwot*, arguing that such explanations give them a temporary character and make them only means to ends, while they are eternal and ends in themselves. Yet he himself did not escape the tendency, for he devoted his whole book, the *Horeb*, to a kind of rationalization of the *Mizwot*, though not in the manner of Maimonides. Nor must we overlook the fact that he continually emphasizes the mission of Israel to save humanity;⁴⁰ and while he does not offer it as the *raison d'être* of the Jews, yet it looms large in his conception of Judaism. On the other hand, it cannot be denied that Hirsch contributed some new elements to the conception of Judaism. These are the soul-stirring feeling of obedience to the word of God and his untiring efforts to endow the performance of the precepts with deep ethical value. His utterances on religious duties are permeated with a remarkable glow of emotion which appeals irresistibly to the soul possessing religiosity. His explanations of the laws and interpretation of their meaning, though far from possessing a philosophic basis, are given with great skill and really unfold their inherent ethical values and prove them to be effective means for development of character.* These are qualities not to be disparaged and partly explain the influence Hirsch exerted upon his generation.

THE LITERATURE OF THE MOVEMENTS

71. POLEMIC LITERATURE

That these currents and movements in Judaism, which made their appearance in the first half of the last century, should have created a considerable literature, is quite evident. Every new tendency in a religion which possesses an established tradition for centuries is bound to meet a strong opposition on the part of those who cling to the old order, and that opposition expresses itself, as a rule in literary pro-

⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 163.

* For detailed discussion of the matter see Sec. 72.

ductions either of a defensive and apologetic character or of an offensive nature, and often in both forms. The same can be said of the literary productions of the champions of the new order, that they likewise both attack the old way of religion and defend the proposed changes and deviations. Yet the literature produced by the partisans of both tendencies is not as extensive as might have been expected, and on the whole, is limited both in quantity and in quality. The reasons for such limitations are several. First, as we know, there were two stages in the Reform movement, the older and milder one which expressed itself primarily in changes in the synagogue worship and the later and more fundamental one. But at no time did the movement present a complete program of principles around which a real controversy could rage. The more radical expression of this tendency was the work of individuals, such as Holdheim and Geiger, but not of the entire party. The second, probably the weightier reason, was the weakness of the traditional party on the one hand, and the change of the language of controversy from Hebrew to German, during the second stage of the movement, on the other hand. These reasons also explain the nature and character of the polemic literature.

During the earlier stage of the Reform movement, when the controversy was carried on mainly in Hebrew, the champions of Orthodoxy could still express themselves freely, and consequently the number of books and pamphlets in that period was considerable. But even then, its character was limited to legal discussions as to whether certain innovations are permitted or prohibited by law. There was not one among the rabbis, famous for their Talmudic learning, who could have undertaken the defense of tradition on a large scale in which the principles and elements of Judaism should be stated logically and orderly. Nor could they foresee the import of that movement and its implications which were bound to have sweeping consequences in the near future. The champions of the innovations were likewise limited in their views and satisfied themselves in defending their innovations also from a legal point of view.

In the later stage, the language of Reform was mainly German, and its opponents, the rabbis of the old order, found themselves handicapped, and the polemics on their side was, therefore, limited. True, there arose new opponents, such as Zunz and Frankel, but these also deviated to a greater or lesser extent from the rigid traditionalism, and besides, as stated, the partisans of Reform did not develop a complete theory. The modern opponents were not, there-

fore, called upon to present in turn their complete view of Judaism, and consequently, their polemics was expressed mainly in reviews, articles, and pamphlets. When Samson Raphael Hirsch did attempt to develop a comprehensive view of the Jewish religion, it had little of the controversial in it. At that time, Reform was already an accepted fact, and the works of Hirsch were not intended to appeal to its followers, but to a distinct class of Jews. They do not, therefore, belong to polemic literature. With these preliminary remarks, we shall turn to survey the leading works of whatever polemic literature the movements produced.

The most important polemic works during the first period of the controversy are the *Nogah ha-Zedek* (The Light of Righteousness) by Eliezer Lieberman; the *Ele Dibrê ha-Brit* (The Words of the Covenant); the *Hereb Nokemet* (The Avenging Sword) by Bresselau; the *Iggeret Al-Asaph* (The Letter of Alasaph) by Aaron Chorin; and the *Brit Emet* and *Neḳam Brit* by David Caro. The first was issued in 1818 by the founders of the Hamburg Temple on whose behalf Lieberman visited a number of cities in Europe in order to obtain the approval of the rabbis for the innovations instituted by them.

Lieberman was, as most of the Maskilim of the day, versed in Talmudic lore, wrote a flowing Hebrew, and was liberal in his religious views. His character, though, was not beyond reproach, and his ultimate conversion to Catholicism corroborated the suspicions of his opponents who accused him of insincerity and unseemly conduct. In the book, however, he speaks as a faithful Jew, loyal to the traditions of his brethren but as one who desires to introduce some changes in the service in order to make it more attractive to the new generation.

The book itself consists of two divisions. The first contains four Responsa from rabbis who approve of the innovations introduced in the Temple and prove that they are permissible from the point of view of the law. Two of the rabbis who sanctioned the reforms were from Italy, Shem Tob of Livorno and Jacob Hai Recanti, head of the Rabbinical Collegium of Verona. The other two, Aaron Chorin and Moses Kunitz hailed from Hungary. Shem Tob and Recanti, though very pious, were not zealots; and when the case was presented to them that the reforms which were, on the whole, mild were intended to strengthen Judaism, they took a liberal interpretation of some of the passages of the codes dealing with the subject and found

no legal objections to the innovations. In fact, Shem Tob later retracted his statement when the rabbis of Germany opposing the reforms presented the matter to him in a different light.

The case was different with the Hungarian rabbis. Chorin, though acting as a strictly orthodox rabbi in Arad, was really convinced of the necessity of the reforms. He was later forced under pressure of the orthodox rabbis of Hungary to retract his statement given in the book, but the retraction was only a matter of expediency. Chorin continued to champion the innovations as his writings subsequent to this retraction testify. In justice to Chorin, however, it should be said that his liberalism extended only to the innovations introduced by the Hamburg Temple, but that he did not champion any fundamental change in the religious principles. He based his views on the Talmud and believed that these innovations could be justified even from an Halakic point of view. At times, he stretched a point and admitted that though the Halakah is against the change, we should still countenance it because of the principle pronounced in the Talmud itself which says, "When the exigencies of the time demand a certain action for the sake of God, we may transgress a point of the law."⁴¹ But he was not entirely consistent as will be seen.

Moses Kunitz, the other Hungarian rabbi who sanctioned the innovations, was a colorful personality. Though a great Talmudist, he never occupied a Rabbinical position, but was engaged in business. He was a mystic and an adherent of the Kabbala and composed a treatise in defense of the authenticity of the *Zohar*; and his views in general were tinged with a good deal of superstition. His sanction of the reforms can partly be explained on the basis of a desire on his part to spite his colleagues, the orthodox rabbis, with whom he quarreled quite frequently.

Very little can be said about the Responsa themselves. They contain the usual Halakic discussions about passages of the Talmud and codes touching the question of innovations and do not enunciate any principles, religious or legal. Kunitz expresses a mild criticism against the leaders of the Temple for keeping it closed on week days and appeals to them to institute daily services.

The second division, called *Or Nogah* (A Shining Light), was composed by Lieberman himself and consists of two parts. The first part is devoted to a lengthy defense of the innovations, in which

⁴¹ *Nogah ha-Zedek*, Div. I, p. 22. The Talmudic statement is found in T. B. *Berakot*, 54a and in many other places.

the author endeavors to prove their permissibility on the ground of various statements in the Talmud and codes. He also refutes *seriatim* all the objections raised by the opponents. The second part discusses the necessity of finding a middle way between the views of those who cling to the old and oppose any change in the form of religion, and the opinions of extreme liberals in Jewry who minimize the value of religion and the observance of the precepts. He condemns both tendencies and accuses the orthodox rabbis of bringing about division in Jewry because of their opposition to enlightenment. He finally appeals to them to help the spread of secular knowledge and science among the Jews and thus strengthen Judaism. To corroborate his view that knowledge of the languages of the nations among whom the Jews dwell and acquaintance with the sciences will not impair devotion to religious belief, he cites the names of illustrious Jews in the past who mastered both Jewish and secular learning. In this work, Lieberman appears as one who has the interests of Judaism at heart and who espouses the cause of reform only because it will bring back the new generation to the religion of their fathers. He displays much learning and mastery of Talmudic lore, of Jewish philosophy, and of ethical and Kabbalistic literature. The book, while appealing for changes in the synagogue worship and the spread of Haskalah, is written in the manner of the Rabbinic books of the day without division into chapters and sections, nor is its style a pure Hebrew but of the type employed by the more enlightened rabbis of the time.

It is to be noted that both the rabbis, who gave their sanction to the innovation introduced by the Hamburg Temple, and Lieberman, who defended them vigorously, do not attempt to justify the change in the text of the prayers which were intended to spiritualize the Messianic idea and omit most of the references to an actual restoration of Zion and to the coming of the Messiah. In fact, they ignore the matter altogether and limit themselves to the discussion of such reforms for which some legal sanction could be obtained. As far as the rabbis were concerned, it can be surmised that, with the exception of Chorin, they were unaware of this important change in the theology of the prayer book, which strikes at the very root of the national hope of the Jews. Lieberman, on the other hand, ignored the subject wilfully, for he knew well that such omission affects not the transgression of an adopted custom but a fundamental dogma

of the creed, and could not be justified from the point of view of traditional Judaism.

While the *Nogah ha-Zedek* is primarily an apologetic attempt on the part of the sympathizers with the reforms, the second work, the *Ēle Dibrē ha-Brit* is a real polemic against the champions of the innovations. It was issued by the Rabbinate of Hamburg in the year of 1819 and contains a collection of letters by famous rabbis from Germany, Holland, and Italy, written in support of the opinion of the Rabbinical court, wherein the innovations were condemned and the members of the Temple Society accused of a desire to deviate from the established ways of the Jewish religion. There are twenty-two Responsa in that collection by eighteen rabbis, all of whom express great zeal and display much Rabbinic erudition in proving the innovations as incompatible with the law. However, it cannot be denied that, in spite of the sincerity of the writers and their loyalty to the established type of Judaism, one feels a certain disappointment both with the tone of the Responsa which does not rise to spiritual heights and with the content which is limited to minute scholastic discussions about the interpretations of certain texts in the Talmud and codes.

In this controversy about the innovations, there were two aspects. First the question of slight deviations from the adopted order of worship, such as the playing of the organ on the Sabbath by a Gentile, the adoption of the Sephardic pronounciation of Hebrew instead of the Ashkenazic (German-Jewish form), and the abolition of the recitation of the *Shemonah Esreh* (Eighteen Benedictions) by the public in addition to the recitation by the cantor. All such changes, though hitherto unknown, could be easily justified legally. The second aspect was that of substituting a German version for the Hebrew of the many prayers, and the omission of the passages referring to the restoration of Zion and the coming of the Messiah. These changes were of greater importance, for the restriction of Hebrew, while legally permissible, indicated a tendency to break up the national unity, and the omission of the Messianic passages implied the denial both of a dogma of faith and of the national future of Israel.

Were the orthodox rabbis fully aware of the grave issues involved in the Reform movement which had just made its appearance, and were their view of Judaism and the Jewish situation broad and clear, they would have concentrated their attack on the last two changes.

Instead, they devote their attention almost entirely to the first class of changes, and with the exception of four or five rabbis, the others pass over the omission of the Messianic principle from the prayer book, though this matter is stated quite emphatically in the declaration of the Hamburg Rabbinical court. Even in the question of the restricted use of Hebrew in the prayers, they only touch on certain legal points in the subject and neglect entirely the national aspect of the matter. Only two of the rabbis saw the question in the proper light. These were the famous Talmudic scholars Rabbi Akiba Eger from Posen and his son-in-law, Moses Sofer of Pressburg, Hungary. Both emphasize the special value of Hebrew as a national language. The first administers the champions of the reforms a stinging rebuke for accepting the ignorance of Hebrew on the part of the people with equanimity. He says, "This prevalent ignorance is in itself a great evil. It implies contempt for our holy language, inasmuch as they do not teach it to their children. They teach them French, Latin, and other languages, but not the sacred tongue. We are then worse than all nations, for each of them cultivates its language while we neglect ours." Sofer speaks in a similar tone and notes the fact that the substitution of Hebrew in the prayer book by another language will ultimately break up Jewish unity.

This collection of Responsa is the principal polemic treatise produced by the followers of the old type of Judaism during the first stage of the Reform movement.

The *Hereb Nokemet* is a little pamphlet written by Bresselau as a rejoinder to the *Ēle Dibrē ha-Brit*. However, besides its flowing Hebrew style and its sharp tone of criticism against those who refuse to allow any change in Judaism, it contains little new.

The *Brit Emet* by David Caro, a Hebrew poet, whose activity on behalf of the spread of Haskalah and liberalism among the Jews of Galicia were noted above (Sec. 32), is another rejoinder to the Responsa of the rabbis. It was published in 1820 under the assumed name of *Amitai* and is divided into three parts, each bearing separate titles. The first contains a fictitious correspondence between two friends concerning the necessity of purifying Judaism from gross beliefs and harmonizing it with the spirit of the time. The second is a defense of the Hamburg Temple reforms; the third bearing the title of *Neḳam Brit* (The Revenge of the Covenant) constitutes the polemic proper. In it, Caro attempts to refute the arguments stated

in the Responsa of some of the orthodox rabbis and vindicate the attitude of the champions of Reform. He analyzes each letter of the collection, points out inconsistencies, and advances strictures against the tone of the writers who declared the reformers heretics and sectarians. At times, he attacks the rabbis for their rigid adherence to every custom, claiming that such an attitude rather impairs the cause of religion than advances it. It is surprising, though, that this champion of Haskalah, who considered himself a Hebrew poet, saw nothing wrong in the substitution of German for Hebrew in the prayers, and he utters no word of regret at the prevailing ignorance of that language, while the old-fashioned rabbis protested against this state of affairs vigorously.

The *Iggeret Al-Asaph*, published in 1826, is a pseudepigraphic treatise by the indefatigable supporter of the innovations, Aaron Chorin. It is an epistle supposed to have been written by an Algerian rabbi to his brethren in Europe. In it this rabbi justifies, under the guise of strengthening the religion of the Jews, all the innovations introduced in the Hamburg Temple. Moreover, it seems that Chorin must have made some progress in his liberalism in the few years which intervened between the writing of his Responsum in Lieberman's collection *Nogah ha-Zedek* and the composition of the treatise. He even makes the African rabbi sanction the innovation to pray without hats, quoting to that effect a Responsum by Solomon Luria, famous Talmudist of the sixteenth century (Vol. II, p. 186). This progress is also evident in the German pamphlet joined to the treatise but written in 1821, where Chorin is no more satisfied with justifying the few innovations under controversy but endeavors to initiate a wider Reform movement and says that, at least as far as customs are concerned, they should be abolished if they do not agree with the spirit and the conditions of the time. He also proposes the establishment of a synod or a smaller Sanhedrin which should decide on all necessary changes in accordance with the spirit of the Talmud. In addition, he retracts in an appendix written in 1826 his statement given in the pamphlet that the Thirteen Articles of creed formulated by Maimonides must be accepted by every Jew, and says that he now adopted the view of Mendelssohn denying the existence of dogmas in Judaism. Consequently, faith cannot be impressed upon the youth by recitation of Articles, but should be inculcated by religious education. This orthodox rabbi certainly traveled far on the road of

liberalism from the time he wrote the letter of retraction to **Moses Sofer** in 1819 included in the *Ele Dibrê ha-Brit* where he says, "The belief in the Messiah is a fundamental of our holy Torah."

Very little of that type of literature besides articles was written in German during that period. There is to be noted only one pamphlet in that language by **Lazarus Riesser**, the father of **Gabriel Riesser**, the noted champion of Jewish emancipation in Germany a few decades later. That pamphlet entitled *Sendschreiben an meine Glaubensgenossen* in Hamburg, appeals to the orthodox element in that community to modify their attitude toward the Temple Society.

Much polemic and apologetic literature was produced during the second period of the Reform movement, mostly in German. The number of Hebrew pamphlets and treatises dealing with the subject is comparatively small. Even the leaders of the Orthodox party employed the German language as the vehicle of expression for their opinions.

The first treatise of this type of literature in that period was occasioned by the controversy between **Geiger** and **A. Tiktin** in the Breslau community. After **Geiger** presented his case in a long address to the government appended to his petition for the confirmation of his election to the Rabbinate, **Tiktin**, his opponent, found it necessary to explain his side of the controversy. He accordingly issued in June 1842 a pamphlet entitled *Darstellung des Sachverhältnisses in seiner hiesigen Rabbinatsangelegenheiten* (Presentation of the Case in the Rabbinical Situation in this Community, i.e. Breslau), wherein he not only gives his own views but also the opinions of eleven other rabbis on the matter of changes in Judaism. **Tiktin** and his colleagues attack vigorously the strivings of **Geiger** and his friends accusing them of a desire to undermine the authority of the law and they declare the immutability of traditional Judaism as embodied in the accepted code, the *Shulhan Aruk*. They further assert that a man of the type of **Geiger** who entertains free opinions regarding the development of the Jewish law, should not be allowed to hold a Rabbinical position. This attack was answered first by **Geiger** himself in his pamphlet "*Ansprache an meinen Gemeinde*" (An Address to my Congregation), published in the year 1842 and then by a two volume collection of Responsa by liberal rabbis issued in 1843 under the name of *Rabbinische Gutachten über die Verträglichkeit der freier Forschung mit dem Rabbiner-Amte* (Rabbinical Responsa on the Compatibility of Free Research with the Functions of the Rabbi). In this lengthy discussion of the subject, the liberal-minded

rabbis not only defend the right of freedom of thought in Judaism, but expound their views on the necessity of reforms in the Jewish religion and justify the efforts on their behalf. This work can, therefore, be considered, though the views expressed there are by no means homogenous, as presenting in general outline the position of the leaders of the new movement. As the gist of the opinions were given above (Sec. 63), we will not enter into any further discussion of the matter.

Simultaneously with the Geiger-Tiktin controversy there occurred another one which precipitated a number of polemic and apologetic writings. This was the new edition of the Prayer Book published by the Hamburg Temple in 1842. This edition revived the strife about the liturgy. Immediately upon its appearance, Isaac Bernays, the Ḥakam of the Orthodox Community of Hamburg issued an interdiction against its use. The leaders of the Temple then turned to the liberal rabbis for an expression of opinion on the legality of the prayer book. These responded readily and their answers were issued in a volume named *Theologische Gutachten über das Gebetbuch nach dem Gebrauch des neuen israelitischen Tempels zu Hamburg* (Theological Opinions on the New Prayer Book of the New Israelite Temple Society in Hamburg). In their opinion, the rabbis, among whom there were also Geiger and Holdheim, express full satisfaction with the changes introduced and, of course, see in them no contradiction to the law. On the contrary, to several of them the prayer book appeared too conservative, for in fact, it did retain a number of prayers referring to the future restoration of the Jewish kingdom in Palestine. Geiger found it necessary, therefore, to issue a special pamphlet on the subject where he analyzed the book in detail and found it wanting in consistency and in thoroughness of principles. According to him, the compilers of the books did not go far enough in their strivings for reform and left the work half done.⁴² The orthodox rabbis of the other type, except for Bernays, took no part in this affair, but Zechariah Frankel attacked the Prayer Book vigorously in a series of articles in the *Orient*. His point of view on the subject was given above (Sec. 67) and need not detain us here.

The case of a father refusing to circumcise his son and at the same time claiming membership in the Jewish community at Frankfort

⁴² The pamphlet was reprinted in Geiger's *Nachgelassene Schriften*, Vol. I, pp. 113-197.

on the Main, coupled with the extreme reform tendency of a society founded in that city at that time, brought the question of the importance of the rite of circumcision in Judaism for discussion. The aged orthodox rabbi of Frankfort, Solomon Trier, addressed a communication to the rabbis of Europe on the question. Forty-one replies were received and twenty-eight were included in a volume entitled *Rabbinische Gutachten über die Beschneidung* (Rabbinical Responsa on Circumcision). In their answers, the rabbis, among whom were many of the Reform wing, all express their conviction that the rite is a fundamental principle of Judaism and that with its abolition, the existence of the Jewish religion is threatened. Especially important in that collection is the lengthy letter of Zunz in which he not only expresses his opinion on circumcision, but also expounds his view on the value and importance of the laws in general. (cf. Sec. 66.)

The Rabbinical conferences in Brunswick and Frankfort which took place in the years 1844-45 aroused great interest in the Jewish world and was reflected in literature. Besides the numerous articles in the periodicals of the time, the protocols of the proceedings of the conferences published in two volumes and Frankel's attack in the *Orient* and in his own publication, *Zeitschrift für die religiöse Interessen des Judenthums*, there were written also a number of polemic works in Hebrew of which we will mention the two most important.

The first is the *Torat ha-Kanaut* (The Way of Zeal) in two parts, published in Amsterdam in 1845. The book contains one hundred and sixteen letters written by rabbis from all parts of Europe who protest vigorously against the movement and its leaders. Most of the letters demonstrate the spirit of zeal for traditional Judaism and the writers denounce the Reform rabbis as Karaites or heretics whose sole purpose is to destroy Judaism. There are also some exceptions; some discuss the question from a broader point of view. The best of these letters is the one by Samson Raphael Hirsch. He is quite aware that the movement is not entirely due to the desire of a number of rabbis to lighten the burden of the law, but that it has deeper and wider causes. He, therefore, after pointing out to the members of the conference that they aim not only at a change in Rabbinical laws, but really at the laws of the Bible itself and at abrogation of dogmas, such as the belief in the Messiah and others, he then turns to the Orthodox and advises them not only to protest but to counteract the Reform move-

ment by intensive religious activity on their part. He reproaches them for the neglect of Jewish education and especially for the low state of higher education. He concludes by an appeal for the increase of Jewish knowledge.

The second one is the *Tokahat Megulah* (An Open Reproach) by Solomon Judah Rapoport. It contains three letters written by him, two to the historian Isaac Marcus Jost, and one to the conference at Frankfort. In this open letter he defends with great warmth traditional Judaism, refutes the theory of some reformers that change was constantly going on in Judaism by pointing out that the new ordinances instituted by the Gaonim were few and some of them were even inclined towards severity in law. He then passes over to polemics and presses the rabbis for a definite statement of their intention. Do they merely want to repudiate the authority of the *Shulhan Aruk* or also that of the Talmud? In the latter case, he warns them against a fate similar to the one which befell the Karaites. He continues by citing the fact that the followers of the Reform movement are only a small part of world Jewry, and the liberal rabbis only a fraction of the number of rabbis of the world who are opposed to them. Why then do they not take account of such facts? He concludes by asserting that their efforts will not succeed, for Jewish traditions withstood many attacks from without and from within, and finally appeals to the more conservative rabbis in the conference to be moderate and restrain the radicalism of the younger members. The letter though written in a dignified and peaceful tone, was not read before the conference but briefly referred to. This angered Rapoport and in a subsequent letter to Jost he expresses his indignation in harsh words. The letters were published by Raphael Kircheim in 1846 with a German translation of two of them.

72. THE *HOREB* BY HIRSCH

The religious movements within Jewry which took place in the first half of the last century produced a literature which, as we have seen, was primarily of a polemic nature and contained little of a positive character. There were a few exceptions, however, and the most notable of these is the *Horeb* by Samson Raphael Hirsch, the champion of the neo-Orthodox movement.

The book which was intended as a complement to the "Nineteen

Letters of Ben Uziel," wherein the author outlined his view of Judaism, aims to give a complete exposition of Judaism in its practical application to life in accordance with that view. It purports to be a miniature replica of the Code of Maimonides, for though Hirsch is primarily concerned with the exposition of the meaning of the precepts and the urgency of their performance, yet he devotes considerable space to the description of the ways in which the laws are to be carried out in life. Consequently, the reader gains a fair knowledge of the manner in which he should apply the laws in his daily life, while he is constantly referred for further study of the minutae of the law to the standard Jewish Code, the *Shulhan Aruk*. In accordance with the intention on the part of the author that the *Horeb* embrace all phases of the Jewish religion, the theoretical as well as the practical, the ethical as well as the legal—limited to the part practiced in exile—it is divided into two parts which are in turn subdivided into six sections corresponding to the six classes into which, according to Hirsch, all the precepts of the Torah are divided. These were given in his "Nineteen Letters" as *Torot* (Doctrines), *Edot* (Symbolic Observances), *Mishpatim* (Social Laws), *Hukkim* (Arbitrary Statutes), *Mizwot* (Commandments), and *Abodah* (Worship).

The first part comprises the exposition of the first two classes of precepts, namely *Torot* and *Edot*, and the second deals with the other four. The underlying conception of the division is that all precepts included in the first two classes are derived from the concept of the Godhead, while that of justice serves as the basis of the other four. However, in order to understand this worthy, though not entirely successful, attempt to explain the larger part of the precepts of the Torah from only two fundamental concepts, we must say a few words about the method of his exposition and the spirit permeating it. Hirsch, as we saw above (Sec. 70), was not a rationalist. To him, as to ha-Levi, Judaism was not a matter of logical proof but primarily of feeling and historical fact, namely that of revelation. Consequently he is not interested in proving his principles, but he merely posits them first, and then proceeds to analyze their general concepts into the constituent parts and apply them to the various precepts. True, the main purpose of his *Horeb* is to supply to the precepts and their performance a rational meaning, but this rationality is not an external one based on proof, but an inner one agreeing with the fundamental principles of his

religious views. There is no attempt to explain the meaning of the precepts from a historical point of view, as Maimonides had done, but they are all interpreted as an expression of the will of God and as a means of training the people of Israel for its spiritual function in the world. They consequently assume meaning only when we conceive clearly the relation of God to Israel.

This relation derived from the first of the Ten Commandments: "I am the Lord, thy God" is defined by Hirsch at the beginning of the first section on *Torot* as follows: "I am thy God! This means I am thy creator, lawgiver, judge, and supervisor over all thy thoughts, feelings, words, and actions. All thy acquisitions and excellencies, inner and external, come to thee from Me. Every breath of thy life is a gift of Mine." Man must, therefore, feel that he, with all that he possesses, whether spiritual qualities, or emotional, or wealth, or bodily prowess, all belong to God, and that he is only an instrument in His hand for carrying out His will. This is the destiny and function of the 'Man of Israel.'⁴³ Again, unity of God is described by him as, "The knowledge that all phenomena in nature as well as in life, whether that of the group or the individual—all are the work of one and unique God and everything is accomplished solely by His will, and everything man possesses is bestowed upon him by the same will."⁴⁴ The second commandment: "Thou shalt have no other gods before Me," he interprets in such a broad way as to include prohibitions: to consider the laws of nature as immutable—though he concedes their regularity—to think of any province of life as not being supervised by divine providence, to forget even for a short time that man is wholly in the power of God and similar matters. All these infractions are thought by Hirsch to be tinged with the taint of the dreadful sin of idolatry.⁴⁵

Small wonder then that with such postulates broadly defined in a more or less arbitrary manner and dictated more by religious fervor than logical reasoning, Hirsch found it easy to explain the other doctrines included in the section and endow them with a certain rationality. Such teachings as the fear of the Lord, love of God, belief in His goodness and trust in Him, and equanimity under suffering assume special meaning in the light of such conception of God's relation to the world and to man. Again, the

⁴³ *Horeb* Pt. I, Sect. I, Ch. I.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, Ch. II.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

ethical ways of conduct, such as humility, conquest of passions, sanctification of life, love of fellow-men, and mercy are also evolved and assume a distinct nobility from the very same concepts. If man is wholly dependent in all manifestations of his life upon the will of God, and that will is embodied in the Torah, how can he act otherwise than to consider himself humble or strive to conquer his passions? Nor is he really free to choose any other ideal in life than the endeavor to sanctify it in accordance with His will. Love of fellow-men and mercy to all creatures follow as a corollary from the principles, for are not all men and even all creatures instruments of God in carrying out His will? We can see then the inner rationality with which Hirsch endows all the precepts and doctrines included in the first class called *Torot*. The teachings discussed correspond to an extent to the subject matter included by Maimonides in his first book of the Code, *Mad'a*, but the view is, of course, greatly divergent. This rationality is entirely consistent, as long as we assume the principles in the exact interpretation given by the author. However, doubt in the rightness of his interpretation never entered Hirsch's mind, and he accordingly proceeds to apply his rationality to the precepts included in the second class—*Edot*.

The second section deals with all such laws and precepts which, according to our author, serve as symbols of the great idea that God is creator of all and the constant supervisor of human life in all its manifestations; their function being to impress upon the Jew that idea by a definite act. Under this class are included the laws of the Sabbath, of the holidays, and other symbolic laws, such as *Tefilin* (phylacteries), wearing of *Zizit* (fringes) and a few more. Their common characteristic is that they embody either the God-idea or His special manifestation towards Israel. With great skill he carries on the symbolism in endeavoring to supply meaning to the performance of the minutae of these laws. Not following in all details his rather curious explanations, we will point out only a few by way of illustration.

In endeavoring to elucidate the rationality of abstaining from all work on the Sabbath, Hirsch says as follows: "The Sabbath symbolizes both the act of creation and the complete mastery of the world by God. The world was created by Him and is His, but in His grace, He allowed man to rule on the earth, to improve nature, and to perform various labors for his benefit. But lest he

forget that all belongs to God, the Sabbath was given to him to remind him of the fact. By ceasing from all work on the seventh day, man symbolically returns the world to God and remembers that he is only a tenant upon the earth and that he is permitted to carry on his work only by the grace of God. It is for this reason that the desecration of the Sabbath is considered by the sages as tantamount to the denial of the existence of God." He further says that the Sabbath was originally given to all men, but since early generations proved themselves unworthy of the law, it was commanded especially to the people of Israel which was selected by God for a particular mission.⁴⁶ He proceeds to explain all the details of the Sabbath laws in accordance with the basic reason for the observance of the day. Similarly interesting is his symbolic explanation of the precept enjoining the Jews to dwell in a hut (*Succah*) for seven days during the Feast of Tabernacles. The *Succah*, says our author, symbolizes trust in God. If one is rich, the *Succah* teaches him that wealth is not all in life; God sustains also those who dwell in tents and possess little. If he is poor, the lesson is impressed upon him with greater force. It has also national significance, for does not the life of the Jew in exile resemble the dwelling in a poor and humble hut about to collapse at any minute, and yet God sustains it and saves His people from extinction. Thus and in a similar manner does the religious teacher apply his symbolic rationality to all the laws and precepts in this class, seeing in them external signs of his fundamental principle.

The second part deals, as said, with the remaining four classes of precepts or laws, namely social ordinances (*Mishpatim*), arbitrary laws (*Hukkim*), commandments (*Mizwot*), and laws relating to worship (*Abodah*). In attempting to evolve some rational reasons for all these numerous precepts, Hirsch posits a second principle, that of justice. It is this principle which should guide man in his actions towards others, just as the right conception of God's relation to the world and life serves as the moving principle of thought and personal conduct. He then proceeds to define justice and says as follows: To act justly is to allow every creature to exercise its proper functions, not to encroach upon what belongs to it, to take from it only what is proper and give to it what is necessary. But what is the standard by which we should determine the "proper and the necessary?" This, he says, consists in such things which

⁴⁶ Ibid, Sect. II, Ch. I.

pertain to the essence of its existence and purpose to which God, the Creator, determined it to be. In other words, man is to treat his fellow-men and all other creatures in such a way as not to deprive them of any rights bestowed upon them by God who thus becomes the source of justice. Our author, though, goes further and expands his concept of justice to include also love; for he says: "God in endowing the creatures with qualities and functions only bestowed upon them gifts emanating from His love; consequently he demands from man also actions permeated with the spirit of love."⁴⁷

Our author finds in the four classes of precepts mentioned the complete unfolding of the principle of justice. *Mishpatim* are based on that principle as applied in relation to fellow-men; and *Hukkim* on justice towards other creatures, both animate and inanimate. The class of *Mizwot* which contain laws relating to family, to fellow-men, and to conduct towards God express in their performance not only the idea of justice but also that of love. The last class of precepts relating to worship, serve as a means for training man for his function to live the ideal life prescribed by the other precepts.

Hirsch finds little difficulty in explaining the rationality of the *Mishpatim* from the point of view of the principle of justice. Here he borrows the Kantian principle that every man is an end in himself and he uses it for his purpose. He, however, infuses it with a religious element. Man, says he, reveals in his spirit a divine manifestation and his body is the temple in which that spirit dwells. Any injury to his body, therefore, is a desecration of a divine temple and an unpardonable sin towards God. In a similar lofty tone he explains all the other civil laws.

Greater difficulty is experienced by him in attempting to find reasons for the arbitrary laws (*Hukkim*), which include such prohibitions as shaving, cross-breeding of animals, the wearing of garments made of a mixture of wool and flax, and similar laws. He applies to them the principle that it is not meet for man to introduce changes in the nature of things or the order established by God in the world. Thus, cross-breeding of animals and plants changes species; the shaving of the beard changes the appearance of the human male from the original form as determined by the Creator. As for the prohibition of the Torah not to eat of the flesh of certain animals, he claims that it is conducive both to the health of the body and the spirit. The animals, the flesh of which the Torah

⁴⁷ Ibid, Pt. II, Chs. I, VI, VII.

prohibited, are on the whole, carnivorous, blood-thirsty, and unclean. To feed on their flesh would predispose man to evil inclinations.

He is, however, quite aware that these reasons are not convincing, and remarks that after all they are only hypotheses and that in our obedience to these laws, we should rely mainly on the wisdom of God who enacted them for a certain purpose, though we can not fathom it.

Hirsch is more successful in his attempt to endow with rationality and meaning the other two classes of precepts, those of *Mizwot* and *Abodah*. Here he has ample opportunity for the display of his high ethical ideals and his deep piety. He succeeds to a great degree to unfold the moral kernel of the precepts and show how they symbolize the love of man and the love of God.

On the whole, the *Horeb* is a noteworthy contribution to Jewish religious literature. It undoubtedly failed in its purpose to harmonize rigid orthodoxy with the spirit of modern times; still it is distinguished by two great qualities, the completeness of the attempt to endow with meaning all the laws without exception and by the religious fervor which permeates it. This fervor, though, led Hirsch to extreme views, the effects of which were harmful to Jewish life. Thus he expresses himself in regard to Jewish nationalism in the following manner: The Jews are a nation even in exile not because of the memories of the past life in their own land, nor even because of their hope of the promised future restoration—though this future will undoubtedly be realized—but because of the covenant between them and God to carry on their mission to cling to the religion given them.⁴⁸ While it is true that the Jews are a nation even in the Diaspora, it is not true that the memories of the past national life and the hope for the future did not contribute to the retention of Jewish nationhood. Jewish history and literature contradict such views and subsequent events in Jewish life completely refuted it. It was the narrowness of this view which strengthened the opposition of the staunch orthodox Jews of Western Europe who are, in the main, the followers of Hirsch, to the Zionist movement in our days.

⁴⁸ Ibid, Ch. XXV.

CHAPTER X

THE BUILDERS OF JEWISH SCIENCE

73. *YOM TOB LIPPMAN (LEOPOLD) ZUNZ*

We devoted the larger part of the preceding chapter to a survey of the views of a number of the leading scholars of the last century on Judaism, the fate of the Jewish people, and its destiny. These views are important, for not only do they form a part of Jewish thought in modern life, but they have influenced life and created movements. There is, however, another phase of the intellectual activity of these men which is equally important and probably of more permanent value, and that is their literary and scientific works. It is these men who during the last century created an extensive literature, bearing upon Jewish history, literature, law, philosophy, and other phases of life and thought, which we are wont to include under one general name, "Jewish Science." In the following pages, we shall attempt to give an estimate of the multifarious works of these men in the various fields and branches of Jewish literature.

We shall turn first to the works of Yom Tob Lippman Zunz, often denominated the founder of "Jewish Science." As we have seen above, Zunz's interest in the study of Jewish literature arose from two motives, which, though different in nature, yet seemed harmonious to him. These were: first, his deep love for his people and its literature, and second, his belief that the proper presentation to the world of the past life of the Jews and their literary achievements during the centuries would bring about their political and social emancipation. To this must be added his belief that the portrayal of their glorious past would stem the tide of conversion and check the flight from Judaism on the part of the young generation. Jewish study became, therefore, to him, after the disbanding of the Society for the Culture and Science of the Jews, the ideal of his life, to the realization of which he devoted sixty years.

His first step in that direction had been made in the *Zeitschrift* (periodical) of that society, in which, as indicated above, he outlined both his conception of Jewish history and a program for his future activity. In the first of these called *Über die in hebräisch-jüdischen Schriften vorkommenden hispanischen Ortsnamen*, he develops the view that the two main phases of the life of the Jews in exile are thought and reaction to suffering, and that it is these two which constitute the principal elements of Jewish history. It then follows that since these two phases were primarily expressed in Jewish literature, that the study of these subjects should have become, and did, in fact, become the principal interest of Zunz. He was, however, quite aware that Jewish literature was a wide field including numerous branches. He himself, in one of his first articles, published in 1818, and called *Etwas über die rabbinische Literatur*, gave such an extensive description of its various branches that it made the undertaking of its comprehensive study, even by a whole company of scholars, seem a daring attempt. This description, however, should be considered not as a program for his own work but rather for the work of the entire group of young scholars who began to make their appearance at the time. For himself he reserved the charting of that part of Jewish literature which concerns itself with the expression of the emotional side of the Jewish spirit more than with the legal and philosophical, namely, the Agada, religious poetry, and ethics. In general, Zunz was more interested in the branches of Jewish literature which reveal the original, the indigenous phases of the Jewish spirit rather than in those which manifest the influence of other cultures. He believed that these literary works reflect more truly the national life in exile and emanate from the very depths of the soul of the people. It was for this reason that he devoted his energies to the exploration of the wide field of Agada, that remarkable reservoir of Jewish thought which was fed by countless streams of views and expressions of generations of sages who taught their people to be steadfast in their loyalty to their religion, comforted them in their suffering, and held out to them hope for a bright future. For the same reason he chose to decipher the mass of *Piyyutim* accumulated during the ages and reveal them to us as the noblest and purest expression of the national soul, both in its reaction to suffering and in its hope for redemption. And again he searched for the original expression of the Jewish spirit in the literary activity of the Franco-German savants who, though hemmed in in a social and a spiritual ghetto, yet produced works of great and permanent value.

As a result of his researches in these fields, he produced his great trilogy: *Die gottesdienstlichen Vorträge der Juden*, *Die synagogale Poesie des Mittelalters*, and *Zur Geschichte und Literatur*.

Each of these books was an epoch-making work in its day, for Zunz had no predecessors in these fields. It was his destiny to quarry the stones for the erection of the literary edifices. He had to scan hundreds of Rabbinic books, thousands of sacred poems, and numerous manuscripts in order to gather his material. Slowly and with painstaking effort, he added fact to fact, item to item, until he succeeded in constructing the frame-work for the histories of the Agada and the sacred poetry of the Jews. I said frame-work and not the building, for Zunz was not a master-builder, though he could have become one were he to use ready materials, but these were not in existence in his day. He drew upon the labors of others only to a limited degree, and had to consume the greater part of his energy in unearthing the materials. It was left for others, his collaborators in the field of "Jewish Science" and his successors to complete the histories of the Agada and sacred poetry, but they all built upon the foundations of Zunz, were guided by his method, and utilized to advantage the materials he had prepared. We shall now turn to a more detailed survey of the works of this pioneer in the development of Jewish studies.

The history of the progress of human knowledge shows us numerous instances of the formulation of important theories or the production of great literary works as a result of comparatively trivial causes. The same is true of the composition of *Die gottesdienstlichen Vorträge*. The motive which called this treatise into being was an insignificant one. It was the purpose of Zunz to prove to the Prussian government, which had, at the instigation of the Orthodox party, prohibited the delivery of sermons in German in the Reform synagogues, that preaching is no innovation in Judaism, but on the contrary, was the most important means of conveying Jewish teaching from the time of Ezra on. This motive, however, did not impair the scientific quality of the work, for Zunz was a conscientious worker, and the search for truth was his only aim. He consequently undertook to give a complete survey of that all-important religious institution from its very beginning as well as the story of the extensive literature it produced.

The first chapter, which serves as an introduction to the entire book, is devoted to a definition and description of the nature and character of the Jewish synagogue service. That service, says Zunz, was not like that of other religions, merely devotional, but concentrated in

itself the entire spiritual life of the nation. From the very early times of the Second Commonwealth, the synagogue assumed more and more importance in Jewish life. Its very name, *Bet ha-Keneset* (House of Assembly) and not *Bet Tefillah* (House of Prayer) indicates its purpose. It was thither that the people flocked to obtain spiritual sustenance and instruction. From the time of Ezra, the reading of a portion of the law during the service was instituted to make the Torah the share of all Jews, and since there were many Jews who spoke Aramaic even in the early period of the Second Commonwealth, there arose a need for a translation into that vernacular. We have thus the origin of the *Targumim* (Vol. I, sec. 72). Later, when the Jewish Diaspora widened and large Jewish communities were established in Egypt and other Greek-speaking countries, there arose a need for Greek translations which were used in the service together with the reading of the law in the original. All translations add to the original for they must explain its meaning, and thus become a form of exegesis. Besides, the reading of the Bible in the synagogue could not serve any real purpose, unless it was accompanied by explanations and elucidations, for the Torah, in order to be effective in life, must on account of its brevity and occasional contradiction implied in various passages, be interpreted. We see then that the service contained, even in early days, besides the prayers, three additional elements: the reading of the law, its translation, and its interpretation. The religious instruction, consisting primarily of interpretation of the Bible was, as a rule, given by means of the *Derashah* or sermon and its method was called *Midrash* (see Vol. I, Sec. 33).

After establishing his main thesis that the *Derashah* in its broad connotation was always the most important part of the service in the synagogue, the author proceeds to the task of elucidating its character and essence and that of the literature it produced during the ages. He begins by pointing out in the second chapter that vestiges of interpretation of the law and other parts of the Bible are found in the late books of the Canon of the Bible itself, namely in the Books of Chronicles and those of Ezra and Nehemiah which he believes to have been edited by the Chronicler. Not only does that author refer to earlier books by the name of *Midrash*, but in his own book, he embellishes the events of earlier Jewish history with many details and interprets episodes in an instructive manner. We may add that the analysis of the Books of Chronicles as well as of Ezra and Nehemiah by Zunz is carried out in such a thorough manner that the chapter by itself

constitutes an important contribution to Biblical study besides being a link in a greater chain of investigation.

The next chapter is remarkable for its comprehensiveness, for in it Zunz not only elucidates the essence of the interpretation of the Bible in all its phases and analyzes the *Midrash* method, but also gives a bird's eye view of the entire literature which that method produced. He begins by telling us that during the early period of ancient Jewish life, there were two classes of instructors of the people, the priests and the prophets. The former interpreted the law, the latter preserved the spirit of the law and deepened the religious feeling of the people. With the beginning of the Second Commonwealth, prophecy ceased and the *Sopherim* (the scribes), the scholars, took the place of both. They developed the method of interpretation which henceforth divided itself into two currents, instruction and expansion of the law proper, called *Midrash Halakah*, or oral law, and instruction in matters of belief, opinion, piety, and conduct, called Agada. Our author then gives a survey of the literature produced, describes briefly the first layers of the Halakah, the *Tannaitic Midrashim* (Vol. I, Secs. 43, 44), the Mishnah, and the two Talmuds, the Palestinian and the Babylonian, and follows the development of the Halakic literature in post-Talmudic times to the end of the Gaonic period. Though his purpose is to give a general survey of the standard works of the sages during this long period, he does not neglect the important details and determines with remarkable skill the dates of the composition of the works, their essential characteristics, their authors or editors, and the analysis of their component parts, thus shedding light upon many problems in both the history of the Jews and that of their intellectual development.

With the fourth chapter, Zunz parts company with the Halakah and devotes himself to the Agada. He first defines its general character, namely that all interpretations which do not refer to the explanation of the practical performance of the laws are Agada. From this definition follow its differentiating marks. The Halakah is fixed and bound by rules of tradition; Agada represents a flux wherein the free expressions of numerous teachers mingle and amalgamate. Yet it is not a mere jumble of words and views. It has definite aims, such as to foster fear of God, piety and good conduct, and to inculcate love of the nation and loyalty to its ideals. It is subjected to the authority of the consciousness of the nation, but within wide limits there is a certain freedom for individual expression on the subjects stated; and due to this freedom, it increased and swelled to enormous proportions. In

the entire field of the Agada, there are to be distinguished three elements: The one of plain exegesis represented by the early *Targumim*; the mystic which aims to elicit from the verses of the Bible secret teachings; and that of discourse, where the verse is merely used as a text for the derivation of diverse teachings. It was this last element which grew so profusely during the ages, for it expanded in all directions, as it drew within itself by way of illustration, tales, and fables, embellishments of historical events, bits of science, and other elements. This discursive element, can, in the whole Agada, be divided into two classes, one where the relation to the text is not entirely in evidence, and is often devoted more to history, ethics, science, or mysticism, and the other where the text is more closely interpreted and made to unfold new ideas and meanings bearing upon the vicissitudes of the times.

As a result of all these differences, Zunz divides the entire Agada in six classes: (a) *Targumim*; (b) Agada in the great Halakic works, such as in the Mishnah, Talmuds, and other works of a like nature; (c) ethical Agada; (d) historical; (e) mystic; and (f) homiletic Agada.

After defining the nature of the Agada, its classification and divisions, he proceeds to more detailed descriptions of each part. Chapter five deals with the various Aramaic translations, and chapter six with the Agadic elements in the Mishnah, Talmud, and other Halakic works, and chapters seven, eight, and nine are devoted to the ethical and historical Agada and to early mysticism. It is impossible for us even to attempt to summarize the contents of the chapters as they abound in details drawn from hundreds of sources.* Suffice it to say that we can only marvel at the skill displayed in the fifth chapter, which is expressed in the analysis of the characteristics of each *Targum*, in describing its peculiar style, in determining its date—approximately of course—in discerning its component elements, and in presenting to us a comprehensive view of the entire Targumic literature. There is hardly a feature in this branch of Agada which escaped the observation of Zunz, and his views, with certain modifications, were accepted by all students in the field. Thus he was the first to observe that the *Targum Jonathan* to the Pentateuch was only a Palestinian Aramaic version, and that its name was due to an error made by copyists and printers in misreading its initials.¹

The same erudition, analysis, and painstaking sifting of sources are

* Much of the gist of Zunz's views was utilized by the author in his presentation of these subjects in Vol. I, Secs. 53, 54.

¹ See Vol. I. p. 117.

evident in the other chapters. In the chapter on the ethical Agada, each book in this class is described and characterized and its peculiarities noted. The field covered is wide, and extends from the sayings of Ben Sira, written in the beginning of the second century B. C. E., to the *Seder Eliyahu*, composed at the end of the tenth century C. E., and not only are the books proper discussed but the variations of readings found in first editions and manuscripts are noted. The chapter on historical Agada scrutinizes in similar manner the entire range of such works beginning with the stories and legends of the Apocrypha to the *Yosippon* and *Sefer ha-Yashar* of the tenth century C. E. (Vol. I, Sec. 188), not omitting works which were lost or works found only in manuscript and were not yet printed in his time. His characterization of early mysticism is brief but comprehensive. In his thorough manner, he begins with the mystic elements in the Bible, such as the theophany (Merkabah) chapters in Ezekiel, and ends with the mystic Agadic books of the *Hekhalot* (Vol. I, p. 385 ff.) in Gaonic times. He devotes also considerable attention to the Book of Ezekiel proper and his remarks on the subject form a distinct contribution to Biblical learning.

Chapters ten to nineteen are devoted to the survey and analysis of the homiletic Midrashim which form the bulk of the Agada. Zunz divides the entire field into seven classes: (a) The cycle of Midrashim to the Pentateuch and the Five Scrolls known as *Rabba*; (b) the cycle of Midrashim to the Pentateuch known as *Tanhuma-Yelamdenu*; (c) the Midrashim known as *Pesikta* arranged according to the readings of portions of the law on festivals and special Sabbaths; (d) Midrashim to other Biblical books; (e) *Pirkê di-Rabbi Eliezer*; (f) small Midrashim to portions of the Pentateuch discussing special subjects; (g) the late Agadic collection of Moses ha-Darshan and Simon Karo, the latter collection known as the *Yalkut Shimeoni*.

To the first two cycles he devotes two chapters (X, XIV) dealing with the various books according to the date of composition and likewise two to the *Pesikta* cycle (XI, XIII), and one each to the other classes. The skill of Zunz in finding material for his subjects from all parts of Jewish literature, even in the most unexpected places, is especially evident in these chapters. With great systematic ability, he added fact to fact, reference to reference, fragment to fragment, and propounded theories, determined dates of composition, assigned parts of books to different periods, and in general brought order in an extensive mass of literature, scattered and disorganized. We can gain a better conception of the quantity and quality of his work when

we remember that the number of Midrashim discussed by him amounts to one hundred and ten, many of which were in his time in manuscript form and some he did not even see. Others were lost, and yet his description of their characteristics were corroborated by later searchers in the field. His theories about some Midrashim, which were based on quotations from them in other works, proved correct when their manuscripts were discovered and edited. We shall cite an illustration of the deep insight of our author. Of the cycle of the *Pesikta*, which contains two books, only one was known to Zunz, the *Pesikta Rabbatai*; the other, quoted by authors as *Pesikta* or *Pesikta di-Rab Kahana*, was contained in several unidentified manuscripts hidden in libraries. Yet Zunz, in his description, practically reconstructed it from quotations in the *Yalkut* and references to its passages in Rabbi Nathan's *Arukh* (Vol. I, Sec. 148). When the *Pesikta* was edited and published by Solomon Buber in 1868, the reconstruction of Zunz was found correct, except as to the order of discourses. That some of his suggestions and hypotheses proved incorrect later by no means detracts from the value of his work.

In the nineteenth chapter, Zunz summarizes the results of his investigations of the various books of the Agada and gives us the general view of this entire literature. He traces its history from its inception in the early days of the Second Commonwealth and divides the long span of time of its development into seven periods, the last of which ends with the Gaonic epoch, and describes the forms of its expression. He elucidates the characteristic features of the Agada, namely, that in all times it was used as a means of instruction of the people in all matters relating to God, Israel, and the conduct of life. As such, it was the expression of the spirit of the nation, but was, of course, influenced by the exigencies of time and place, and consequently its various works reflect the conditions of the periods during which they were produced and that of the places where they arose. In regard to the birthplace of the Agada, Zunz, with his remarkable insight, saw correctly that the greater part of it was produced in Palestine from the sixth to the ninth centuries. This assertion is of great significance for the influence of Palestine upon the lands of the Diaspora, even in a period when Babylonia held sway in the Jewish world, is thus revealed to us. This fact, continues Zunz, is of importance, for in Palestine the Jewish national spirit was preserved in a more comparative pristine purity than in the lands of the exile, and is consequently reflected in the Agadic

works. And because of the national character of the Agadic books, they do not bear the impress of individual authors, but like the Psalms and the Talmud, they belong to the entire nation and are the products of its genius.

His next task is to delineate the means of transmission of the variegated teachings which were later incorporated in Agadic works. This was, in his opinion, the oral *Derash* or sermon, and he devotes his twentieth chapter to tracing its development during a millennium and a half. He cites hundreds of references which prove the efficacy of the sermon in all times.

With the end of the Gaonic period in the first half of the eleventh century, the actual production of the Agadic works ceased, but public teaching continued. Moreover, the Agada itself became a subject for explanation, and a source of texts for discourses. To this further manifestation of the Jewish spirit, three chapters are devoted. In the first of these (XXI), Zunz deals with the transmutation of the Agada into religious poetry. Sacred religious poetry, or the *Piyyutim*, which, in his opinion, began to flourish² at the end of the ninth century in Italy and continued to develop for several centuries, became the heir of the older Agada and merely expressed the contents of the former in poetic form. In his characteristic manner, our author gives a brief sketch of the development of both the liturgy in general and of the *Piyyutim* in particular, subjects to which he later devoted whole books.

Chapters XXII and XXIII discuss the progress of public instruction by means of the sermon during the Mediaeval Ages. He adds a wealth of detail about the leading *Darshanim* and their homiletic works. Most interesting is his sketch of the rise of the Yiddish dialect and the peculiarities of its vocabulary. This subject is touched upon in an indirect way while discussing the development of the sermon in Germany from the sixteenth century on. Yet it is treated with the thoroughness characteristic of the author.

The concluding chapter deals with conditions in his own day, and after sketching the spiritual situation of German Jewry from the time of Mendelssohn to his day, he comes to the conclusion that the delivery of the sermon in German in the synagogue is the surest means for reviving Judaism in that country. It must not be denied that the conclusion, which was wholly permeated by the spirit of the time,

² We know now that sacred poetry flourished much earlier and that its birthplace was Palestine and not Italy.

is not a very fitting one, but that should by no means affect our appreciation of the value of the work.

The *Gottesdienstliche Vorträge* was a landmark in the development of Jewish studies in the last century. It laid the foundation and created the frame-work of a history of a large part of Jewish literature wherein the Jewish spirit was revealed in its purest form. It showed us the wealth of ideals it contains, and brought order and system into a mass of literary productions of which even the Jewish scholars had little conception. Besides, it threw light upon hundreds of episodes in Jewish history and delineated the method of study and research of generations of Jewish scholars. Some of Zunz's conclusions and suggestions undoubtedly proved wrong, but his fundamental theories are still valid today. The book, after more than a century of its appearance, is not antiquated as yet, and to a great extent has not been superseded.

Zunz now turned to elucidate the second fundamental expression of the past national life of the Jews, namely, their reaction to suffering as embodied in the literature of the ages, in his second book, *Die synagogale Poesie des Mittelalters*, published in 1855, where he traces the emotional expression of the national soul for over a millennium. The sacred religious poetry which centered around the services continued the work of the Agada, except that it laid more stress on feeling than on thought and used the more attractive form of song and hymn. It is consequently the best reflection of the inner life of the nation during the Middle Ages, the period of Jewish suffering and martyrdom. These sacred poems multiplied and increased to fabulous numbers. They were composed and produced by numerous singers during the centuries, and like the Agada, formed a mass of unorganized and uncharted literature until Zunz came and with his skill brought into it order and revealed to us its beauty and its intrinsic value.

The book contains only five chapters, but each of these forms a distinct contribution to Jewish literature and history. In the first chapter called Psalms, Zunz, true to his characteristic in searching for the complete unity of Jewish life, traces the origin of religious poetry to the Bible, especially to the Psalms. Psalm singing was, according to our author, as typical an expression of the Jewish genius as prophecy, except that the former reflects the youthful life of the nation, while the latter, the more sober period, the one of struggle against

subjection to the vicissitudes of the times. The prophet is free and speaks in the name of God to masses of people, while the psalmist, feeling the burden of life, cries to God in his loneliness; the prophet interprets history and foretells the future, the psalmist merely bewails his tribulations and hopes for a better future; the psalmist, however, does not speak for himself alone, but for the entire people. He is the mediator between the people and God. The prophet is the messenger of God to the people, while the psalmist is the messenger of the people to God. Consequently, both prophecy and psalm-singing are national literary productions. The Psalter, as a whole, notwithstanding its earlier elements, is thus the prototype of all religious poetry composed during the entire long period of the exile. All elements are found there, the plaint of the poet, the suffering of the people, the heavy burden of sin, the exaltation of the righteous men of the past, the trust in God and the plea for His mercy, and finally the hope for a brighter future for Israel and the confidence in the ultimate coming of the Kingdom of God—All these found their expression there and served as a pattern for later compositions by poetic souls.

During the centuries of exile, when suffering and subjection gripped the soul of the nation, it found refuge in the synagogue. There, the scholar, the Agadist, taught the Torah and expounded religion, continuing the work of the prophet, and there the sacred singer sang, continuing the work of the psalmist.

For a time, the liturgy was of a more simple nature, but soon it became more and more complicated in proportion as the synagogue became the spiritual center of the life of the people. It is then that sacred poetry made its appearance again and became an additional vehicle of expression of the feelings of the nation. It assumed a new name, that of *Piyyut*⁸ and began to multiply and grow as numerous additions to the liturgy proper. *Piyyut*, in its various phases, (for its divisions see Vol. I, Sec. 130) expressed the feelings of the nation, but the deepest of all these feelings was the one engendered by the continuous suffering of the people during the entire Middle Ages. Suffering is consequently the most important motive of this sacred poetry, nay the very warp and woof of this literature. Zunz, therefore, devotes the second chapter to a survey of the tribulations of the Jews during half a millennium. He gives in chronological order a list of the principal massacres, persecutions, and exiles undergone by

⁸ For its origin, see Vol. I, p. 207.

the Jews in various countries during that period and the reflection of these in contemporary poems. It is a soul-stirring chapter, for nothing so moves us as the concrete and the definite. Moreover, it also arouses our astonishment at the remarkable vitality of our people, which could withstand all these assaults, and we emerge from its perusal with mixed feelings of anguish and pride. It was this chapter which influenced George Eliot in the writing of her famous novel, *Daniel Deronda*. The opening paragraph of this remarkable chapter she quotes verbatim (for the translation of this paragraph, see Vol. I, p. 208).

In the third chapter, called *Piyyut* and *Seliḥah*,⁴ Zunz enters upon his main task. These two divisions form the principal phases of the sacred poetry of the ages. The line between the two cannot be drawn fast, but on the whole, the first was more closely connected with the service and laid greater emphasis upon the religious and national elements, though suffering occupies an important place in its poetic expression. It follows to a very close degree the Agada in its content. The *Seliḥah* represents a devotional and penitential poem. It reflects, to a much greater degree, the conditions of the time and the tragedy of Israel, the echo of which reverberates in it in soul-stirring tones. Zunz devotes more than ninety pages to the analysis of the character of the entire sacred poetry in all its phases. He first divides the *Piyyut* into classes,⁵ then arranges its constituent parts and shows the close connection of their content to the parts of the standard liturgy, and discusses the poetic construction of the various types of poems, the number of lines in each strophe, and the kind of rhymes used by each author. The various poetic devices are taken up next in a detailed discussion of the kinds of acrostics employed, such as that of the name, patronymic, titles, and blessings. This is followed by an analysis of the Paitanic style where Zunz defends the sacred singers against repeated charges made from the time of Abraham Ibn Ezra that they destroyed the purity of the Hebrew language. He shows, on the contrary, that while it cannot be denied that many of these poets allowed themselves too much license in coining words and employing strange forms of verse, on the whole, the *Paitanim* contributed a certain flexibility to the language. The chapter is concluded with a description of the main content of hundreds of *Seliḥah* poems and

⁴ For a detailed description of the differences between the two, consult Vol. I, pp. 241, 242.

⁵ Consult on this subject Vol. I, p. 240.

the enumeration of their motives, their variations, and applications. In this description of the nature and character of the *Piyyut* literature, Zunz devotes more attention to the work of the Franco-German singers than to the more polished and more perfect productions of the Sephardic bards. He sees in the less elegant utterances of these pious singers a more original and deeper religious expression than in the sacred poems of the poets of the Golden Age. Eliezer ben Kalir (Vol. I, Sec. 120), the earliest and the most prolific *Paitan* and the one who was more often attacked than any of his successors for corrupting the purity of the language, is his special favorite. He sees in him a genuine national poet, one who expressed the feelings of the people though not always in exalted form. He even admires his portrayal of nature. The value of the chapter is enhanced by numerous masterful translations of poems illustrating the theoretical part.

The following chapter gives an account of the works of more than one hundred *Seliḥah* poets together with specimens of their poems in a superb German translation. This chapter which covers close to two hundred pages is divided in two sections, the first of which is devoted to the productions of the Franco-German poets and the second to the Spanish. In this connection, he discusses the types of the meter used by these poets and the essential characteristics of the more elegant devotional poems, differentiating them from the standard type of *Seliḥot*.

The last chapter is a survey of the persecutions the Jews suffered during the first two centuries of modern times, the sixteenth and the seventeenth, and the reflection of the Jewish situation in the sacred poetic literature. It contains also a carefully compiled list of all poets during the period. There are twenty-eight appendices dealing with individual and detailed characteristics of all kinds of sacred poems, such as the origin of special names for certain types of poems, acrostic devices, the special construction of verbs and nouns used by the *Paitanim*, the extent of the use of Talmudic words, and similar matters. A number of these appendices bear on the content of the poems, as for instance, their relation to the Agadic sources, to mystic teachings, the use of the names of angels, and the attitude expressed in the literature toward other nations and religions. All these matters shed light upon the character of the extensive sacred poetic literature.

In this work, Zunz accomplished as much for sacred poetry as he had for the Agadic literature in his *Gottesdienstliche Vorträge*. He

once more charted and brought order in an extensive part of Jewish literature, and revealed to the world the pathetic and majestic tragedy of the life of a nation during many centuries, the extent and depth of which is so vividly reflected in these poems.

As a supplement to this work, Zunz issued four years later, in 1859, his work on Jewish liturgy called *Die Ritus des synagogalen Gottesdienstes*. In this work, the author traces the development of the different orders of the synagogue services adopted by the various Jewries. In his usual manner, he discusses the changes in the synagogue ritual in early times and follows them up in their constant divergence. He is especially interested in the historical formation of the two great orders of service, that of the German (Nusah Ashkenaz) which became the standard liturgy of all West and East-European Jewries, and that of the Spanish (Nusah Sephard), the liturgy of the Jewries of the East and those of North Africa. He finds that this divergence was primarily due to the influence of the two centers, Palestine and Babylonia. The former influenced the Ashkenazic liturgy and the latter the Sephardic. He does not, however, neglect to note the smaller deviations in the liturgy, such as the Greek or Byzantine, the Roman, and those of other centers, all of which represent divergencies in certain liturgical features. The changes are, of course, greater as regards the collections of sacred poems or *Piyyutim* included in the prayer books than in the prayers proper. The recitation of poems and *Selihot* were affected more by local conditions than the prayers, and each Jewry had special persecutions which called forth the composition of particular poems and they were consequently included in their *Mahsor* (cycle of prayers). Even these differences are noted by Zunz who gives a survey of the various *Mahsorim* of different Jewries. We thus get a comprehensive view of the historical development of the Jewish liturgy in all its phases.

The final link in Zunz's works in the field of Jewish sacred poetry is his *Literaturgeschichte der synagogalen Poesie* published in 1865. In the *synagogale Poesie*, he dealt primarily with the nature and character of this extensive literature, while in the last work he deals with the poets and their individual works. In the thirty years which elapsed from the time Zunz came to be interested in this literature, much was accomplished by various workers in the field of Jewish knowledge. A band of scholars, such as Rapoport, Luzzatto, Dukes, and Michael Sachs had enriched this branch of study by their labors. Libraries were searched, manuscripts were scanned, collections of

poems (*Diwans*) and various *Mahsorim* were published. All these labors together with Zunz's own indefatigable work in this branch of study enabled him to write his last great book, a complete history of the sacred poetry in Israel during a period of twelve hundred years.

In the introduction (Ch. I), the author surveys the historical literature of the Jews and points out its insufficiency and defects. He endeavors first to explain the lack of interest of Jewish scholars during the Middle Ages in history and finds the reason for it to have been the harassing condition of the Jews in exile. A suffering people scattered to the four corners of the earth could not devote itself to an objective view of its own history. The energy of its scholars was entirely consumed by the efforts to create spiritual weapons for the people in order to carry on its battle for existence. As a result, the historical material left by these scholars is scanty and often incorrect. Enumerating all the historical books of the Mediaeval period and pointing out their deficiencies, Zunz shows conclusively the need for a work like his which aims to give the history of a literature which had been neglected by earlier writers, and the writing of which was made possible only in modern times. The book proper, containing fifteen chapters, is divided into three parts. The first part, embracing two chapters (II, III), deals with the period of sacred poetry up to the time of Eliezer ben Kalir whom Zunz placed in the earlier part of the tenth century—a view which later proved erroneous. The second part (Chaps. IV-VII) embraces the history of the poets and poetry from Kalir to 1140, the end of the heyday period of that literature; and the third (Chaps. VIII-XIV) continues the history to 1540. The last two chapters give additional data bearing on that history, such as lists of poets whose time of activity could not be determined and of anonymous poems. There are also a number of appendices to this work which deal with various subjects connected with the history and throw light on other branches of Jewish literature, especially on that of mysticism.

It is hardly possible to estimate the amount of labor expended by Zunz in the writing of the history of the sacred poetry. It is enough to point out that the number of poems of all classes listed and characterized is over six thousand, and the number of poets whose lives and works, even in other fields of literary endeavor are described, reaches close to a thousand. The entire Jewish literature had to be scanned, libraries searched, hundreds of manuscripts read, and nu-

merous problems bearing on literary and historical questions solved in order to produce this great history.

The erudition and extensive knowledge of Zunz was not limited merely to the two great literary manifestations of the Jewish spirit, the Agada and sacred poetry, but embraced all departments of Jewish spiritual and intellectual productivity, and his contribution to Jewish history and to other literary branches are likewise of great value and of the utmost importance, even if not as complete as in the above-mentioned fields. These contributions are embodied in his work *Zur Geschichte und Literatur* published in 1845. This book of more than six hundred pages consists of six parts or rather essays on important historical and literary subjects of which the first on the literature of the Franco-German Jewries during the Middle Ages is the most valuable. In this work, Zunz does not construct frameworks of literary edifices, but merely gathers stones for future buildings. Yet these stones are of such gigantic size that a number of them when merely put together form a solid foundation for a comprehensive view of large periods of the history of the Jews and their literature.

The work is preceded by two introductions, one dealing with the character of Jewish literature in general, and the other with its division into periods and epochs. In the first, which was intended more for the outside world than for Jewish readers, Zunz proves the value of the study of Jewish literature for the advancement of human progress as a whole. The study of the spirit of humanity, says he, in all its manifestations throughout history can be best accomplished by a general study of the literatures of all nations which reflect these manifestations and also reveal its unity in spite of the apparent diversity. Were such a comprehensive study possible, we would have obtained a complete view of human history. But since the time for such a task has not yet arrived, as peoples are not conscious of the unity of the spirit permeating them all, it remains for historians to devote themselves to the literatures of individual peoples, and gradually from the study of the parts reach a view of the whole. In such a way, the knowledge of the literature of the Jews becomes of great importance. Due to the long existence and to the peculiar position of the Jews as a people scattered throughout the world and which came in contact with the culture of all nations, their literature displays not only the characteristics of their own genius, but also reflects some of the features of other cultures. Its study will thus contribute to a better un-

derstanding of the development of the human spirit. He devotes the rest of the introduction to the proof of his theories, namely the close relation of Jewish literature to the cultural currents of the ages, and to a survey of the points of contact between the two. In this connection he draws a sketch of the attitude of Christian scholars towards Jews and Judaism as revealed in their works on the subject and points out its narrowness and shortcomings. They all viewed that literature under the aspect of theology and Rabbinics, while in reality it is a multifarious expression of the life of a people in all aspects. He concludes, therefore, that only by the proper study of that literature, which should be undertaken by Jewish scholars, can a right conception of the Jewish people by the world at large be obtained. He expresses his belief that the equalization of the Jew in life and in the state will ensue from the equalization of the knowledge of Judaism and its literature with those of other religions and literatures, a belief which seems to us at present naïve indeed, but which was in harmony with the spirit of his time.

In the second introduction, he surveys the entire Jewish literature and divides it into three periods which correspond to the periods of general history: the Ancient period, which ends with the fall of Rome; the Mediaeval, ending with the rise of the Reformation and the decline of the power of Catholicism; and the Modern. He is quite aware though that as far as the Jews are concerned, the Mediaeval period extended much longer. These periods he further subdivides into eleven epochs and gives the characteristics of each. He then draws his conclusions that in order to understand Jewish life and the spirit of the people, we must study the entire Jewish history and literature through all its periods and epochs, for it is only then that the unity of the spirit will be revealed to us. Special attention, says he, should be given to the activities of the savants of the Franco-German Jewries which reflect much of the original bent of the Jewish genius.

He then takes up these activities under four heads: (a) the *Tosafists*, namely the Talmudic scholars; (b) exegetes of the Bible; (c) grammarians; and (d) ethical teachers. In this essay we not only get lists of all the scholars in the various fields, but also their biographies and characterization of their works, their views and attitudes toward life and religion. While no general construction of the literatures discussed is intended, yet the wealth of detail, the many elucidating remarks enrich our knowledge of the entire period to a great degree.

The crown of this long essay is the last chapter entitled *Charakteristik*, which occupies fifty pages. In this chapter, Zunz gives a picture of the inner life of the Franco-German Jewries during the Mediaeval period as reflected in the literature. The root of that life was the national religious feeling which permeated it completely. From that root there grew three trunks: the religious practice and conduct, divine service, and religious knowledge. The first was expressed in Halakah and ethics; the second in liturgy and sacred poetry; and the third in exegesis. After giving us a bird's eye view and generalizing the details in the preceding chapters of the literary activities in the various branches, he constructs in brief the life of these Jews as reflected in the books of the period. He begins with the education of the children, passes to the position of women in that society, and then to the economic occupations, such as domestic economy, the relation of the Jews to the Gentiles, their cultural status, and communal order. He then turns to the description of the state of scholarship and discusses the subjects of copyists and books. We are told the names of the humble workers in the field of literature whose copying of books, whether in discharge of professional service or as a labor of love, preserved for us during the ages the numerous works we possess. We learn of the intense love of knowledge of the Jews of the time by the prices paid by them for books. We will quote one illustration: In the year 1150, when the annual rental of a house in German-Jewish communities varied from a half to a whole silver mark, Jews paid one mark for an unvocalized Pentateuch and three marks for a vocalized one with the notes of the author. Such examples of placing a higher value upon spiritual than material needs could be multiplied many times.

The other essays on Bibliography, the Memory of the Righteous, the Jewish Poets of the Provence, the History of the Jews in Sicily, and Numismatics in Jewish Literature deal, with the exception of the one before the last, with technical phases of Jewish literature. Yet they are of great value to every one interested in the Jewish past for they shed light on many of its phases. Especially noteworthy is the essay on the Memory of the Righteous. This essay which occupies close to one hundred and fifty pages is filled with a multitude of details, such as the deciphering of hundreds of abbreviations found in Jewish literature, inscriptions on tombstones and similar things. Still under the master-hand of Zunz, these details group themselves into an exquisite picture of phases of Jewish life, history,

and thought. Through the discussions of the abbreviations, we obtain a view of the reverence paid by the Jews to scholars and to righteous men, and by children to their parents, both during life and after death. Even the relation of the Jews to the pious Gentiles is not omitted. A chapter is devoted by him to the question of whether the pious Gentiles share in the world to come. The views of scholars in all ages on the subject are quoted and synthesized. His discussion of tombstone inscriptions reveals to us a very tragic corner of Jewish history by his enumeration of the vandalic acts perpetrated on the dead in numerous cities of Germany, France, and England during the Middle Ages by the use of the tombstones of the Jewish cemeteries after the expulsions as building material for various edifices. By tracing the genealogies of the names in the inscriptions, Zunz fills many lacunae in the life-histories of illustrious Jewish families. Thus this essay illumines many phases of Jewish life and literature.

The book formed, like its predecessor, *Die gottesdienstlichen Vorträge*, a landmark in Jewish studies, and served as an impetus to younger scholars to continue their own work in the many paths blazed by the master.

Even this book did not exhaust the literary activity of Zunz. His erudition and comprehensive knowledge of the entire Jewish history expressed itself in numerous articles in various periodicals and encyclopedias. These were later collected in three volumes, which were published in 1874 by the Zunz Foundation. The most important of these are: *Die Namen der Juden* and *Die geographische Literatur der Juden*. In the first, Zunz treats comprehensively of the various names the Jews in all countries bore from Biblical to modern times, and traces their relation to the languages used by them in their long national life. Like in all his works, he endeavors to find the general conditions of the times of which the phenomena of name-giving are an indication, and discovers through them phases of the Jewish attitude to the surrounding cultures. The second is an exhaustive survey of all books on geography written by Jews from the Biblical period to his own day.

Zunz wrote a number of articles on Biblical subjects in which, in spite of his conservatism, he inclines towards the critical view. The great work in this field is his edition of a new German translation of the Old Testament in the years 1837-38. He himself translated only the Book of Chronicles, but his skill is expressed in the unification and coordination of the works of others (Sec. 81).

Zunz wrote only few articles in Hebrew, though he both loved and mastered that language. These are *ha-Palit* (The Remnant), containing a description of a number of manuscripts with critical notes; the Life of Azariah dei Rossi (Vol. II, Sec. 144), published in the periodical *Kerem Hemed*, Vol. V; on Eliezer ben Kalir in the same periodical, Vol. VI; and an introduction to the *More Nebukē-ha-Zeman* of Krochmal (Sec. 75) which he edited in 1851. Of these, the biography of dei Rossi is the most important, as in addition to the life of that great scholar, it portrays also very vividly the cultural state of the Jews in Italy in the first half of the seventeenth century.

From all what was said about the quantity and quality of the works of Zunz, we can easily gain a conception of the high place he occupies in the literature of Jewish learning of the last century. He justly deserves the title oft bestowed upon him "The father of Jewish studies in the nineteenth century."

74. SOLOMON JUDAH RAPOPORT

In the foundations of Jewish learning laid by Zunz there was incorporated much material borrowed from the works of another great scholar whom Zunz thanks repeatedly in the prefaces to his own works. That savant was Solomon Judah Rapoport. Zunz, however, was not the only one who used his data to good advantage. Many other scholars availed themselves of the treasures of his great knowledge accumulated in his numerous essays, and he was constantly referred to by succeeding writers on the subjects treated by him. He is, therefore, to be considered, along with Zunz, as one of the leading workers in the field of Jewish history and literature.

Rapoport, however, differed from Zunz not only in education, inasmuch as his was a thoroughly Talmudic one (see Sec. 68) and in the language he employed in his writings, as he wrote almost exclusively in Hebrew, but also in the method of his treatment of the subjects he discussed. The mind of Zunz was more of the synthetic type, for while he collected an exceptionally large mass of details, his purpose was to unite them into a complete whole; and he was primarily interested in discovering in them the applications of general rules and principles which he laid down in advance. The mind of Rapoport, trained in Talmudic discussion, was of the analytic type which endeavors to analyze a subject into its constituent elements and trace each to its origin. Rapoport, unlike Zunz, did not undertake to survey whole periods of history or entire branches of litera-

ture, but limited himself to the elucidation of one particular subject. He, therefore, became the master of the historical essay. And since nothing lends itself as appropriately to such treatment as the life and works of a great man, he devoted his early efforts in the field of Jewish studies to the biographies of the outstanding men in Jewish history and literature. In fact, it was his belief that the spirit of the Jewish people revealed itself primarily through the successive activities of great men, and only by a delineation of the lives of these men can we attain a complete conception of the life of the people. This can be deduced from the fact that he planned to write a work under the name *Anshē-ha-Shem* (Men of Renown) that was to embrace the biographies of all great Jewish men from the prophets to his day. He mentions this work frequently in the introductions to his essays. Another great dream of his was to write an encyclopaedic dictionary of the Talmudic period where in hundreds of articles, each devoted to a particular subject, he intended to discuss the entire contents of Talmudic literature as well as to portray the life of the period.

His plans, however, were not realized, for the bitter struggle for existence and the persecution of the fanatics prevented Rapoport from accomplishing his purpose, and his great talent expressed itself primarily in single essays on a number of subjects. As a result, we have only the following works: a collection of biographies, originally published in the periodical *Bikkurē-ha-'Ittim* (Sec. 25) which, together with subsequent additions were republished under the name *Toldot* (Biographies); the first part of his planned encyclopaedic dictionary *Ereḥ Millin*, published in 1862; a volume of letters exchanged between him and other Jewish scholars, mainly with Samuel David Luzzatto, and a number of essays on various subjects.

Still, though the literary heritage of Rapoport is not imposing in quantity, as compared with that of Zunz or other scholars of the last century, it excels in quality, and his contribution to Jewish knowledge, especially to the method of historical research, is permanent and lasting.

The *Toldot* contains six biographies: (a) of Nathan of Rome, the author of the *Aruḥ*; (b) of Saadia Gaon; (c) of Eliezer ben Kalir; (d) of Hai Gaon; (e) of Hannanel Gaon; and (f) of Nisim Gaon. Each of these men represents a focal point either in the history of a center of Jewry, or in a certain branch of literature, or in both. Thus, Nathan and Kalir—whom Rapoport placed in Italy in the

middle of the ninth century; both assertions proved erroneous—reflect in their activities the intellectual life of the early history of Italian Jewry on the one hand, and the rise of Talmudic philology and interpretation, as well as that of sacred poetry, on the other hand. Saadia and Hai mirror in their writings the conditions of Babylonian Jewry in the last Gaonic period, as well as the development of Biblical exegesis, Hebrew grammar, Talmudic commentation, and Jewish philosophy; the story of Ḥannanel and Nisim bears upon the rise of a new center of Jewry, that of North Africa, and its extensive literary activity. As the interest of Rapoport in these men was not merely to give details of their lives but to describe the influence they exerted, their relation to other great men, the sources from which they derived their knowledge, and similar phases of their personality and activity, he wrote his biographies in an entirely different way than biographies are usually written. The actual facts of the life and activity of the men are given in several pages and to these is appended a series of notes which occupy ten or more times as many pages. It is in these notes that the value of the essays consists. In them all kinds of historical and literary problems are grouped around the central figure of the subject and discussed and elucidated. Thus in the biography of Nathan of Rome the notes, which run close to a hundred, deal with the character of numerous books quoted by him, among them the early codes of the *Sheiltot* and *Halakot* *Gedolot* (Vol. I. Sec. 152), the nature of the earlier dictionaries, the lives and works of a number of Gaonim quoted in the *Aruk* and of early Franco-German scholars, the content of some lost *Midrashim*, linguistic problems, and similar subjects. And as no problem in Jewish history or literature is isolated but always bears a relation to other facts and events, the range of discussion increases and notes often become small treatises. In addition, Rapoport added several lists of words in the *Aruk* which need explanation, and as a result the biography of Nathan, the text of which hardly occupies seven pages, swelled to one hundred and twenty-seven, while its scope includes the activities of many great men during several centuries and also numerous facts, data, and explanations of problems bearing upon various phases of Jewish literature. Similarly, in his biography of Saadia, in connection with the discussion of his works, he proves the spuriousness of several commentaries, one on the Book of Creation (Vol. I. Sec. 182) and the other on the Book of Daniel, which for generations were ascribed to the Gaon, but are not his. In his biogra-

phy of ben Kalir, he discusses the differences between the views of the German and the Spanish scholars in regard to Hebrew grammar—especially on the construction of the verb—and the rise of Paitanic activity in Italy and Germany, sketches the entire development of the standard liturgy, and propounds an important theory on the origin of religious and cultural differences between the European Jewries known as Ashkenazic and that of the Spanish, or Sephardic. Rapoport was the first to observe that these differences were mainly a result of two diverse currents of influence exerted upon the respective countries. Spain was completely under the influence of the Babylonian center, while the other European Jewries were influenced by Palestine. That influence was spread first to Italy which, because of its location, was in constant communication with the Holy Land and was from there transmitted to France and thence to Germany. This ingenious suggestion made by Rapoport as an hypothesis on the basis of only a few facts, and which was, as we have seen above, accepted by Zunz, was fully corroborated by later discoveries of documents brought to light by various scholars. Important problems in Jewish history and literature are also treated extensively by our author in his biographies of Hai, Hannanel, and Nisim. In these, he reconstructs from quotations in later books Hannanel's commentary on the Pentateuch, which was probably the first complete Hebrew commentary on the Pentateuch written during the Middle Ages, throws additional light on the development of Jewish life and learning in Italy during the tenth century, and discusses many literary works of different authors.

Thus, the six biographies, though they nominally treat of only six men, in reality resuscitated one of the important epochs in Jewish history, the tenth and eleventh centuries during which several Jewish centers took their rise and began their historical development. They illuminated a number of points in the entire literature and gave an impetus to many scholars to continue research in various fields of Jewish knowledge. Small wonder then that the influence of these biographies was great and that they were considered in their day epoch-making. As an illustration we can point to the fact that Zunz who published his *Gottesdienstliche Vorträge* in 1832, only one year after their appearance, refers to Rapoport in that book one hundred and ten times. Besides, they provided discussion in the learned periodicals of the time. The other scholars, such as Zunz, Luzzatto, Chajes, and others wrote criticisms of them and corrected many of the views by supplying additional information to which strictures

the author replied in new essays, and thus a polemic which brought fruitful results arose and lasted for several years.

The main value of these biographies lay not so much in the information which Rapoport furnished as in the evolving of a new method in Jewish research. He was at great disadvantage as compared with Zunz, for the latter lived in Berlin and had access to libraries and manuscripts. Rapoport, who lived in Galicia, had a limited number of books at his command and hardly any manuscripts; and consequently the theories he expounded, the suggestions he offered, the corrections he made in hundreds of readings in various books were mainly a result of his critical acumen and mental keenness. He thus evolved the critical method in the study of Jewish history and literature and blazed a path for those who followed him.

What the biographies of Rapoport accomplished for the widening of our knowledge of the history and the literature of the early Mediaeval period, the first volume of his dictionary, the *Ereḥ Millin*, accomplished for the Talmudic period. The dictionary was not intended to merely give the meaning of the words found in Talmudic literature but to throw light upon Jewish life during a period of more than five hundred years, from the early Tannaitic times (first century B.C.E.) to the close of the Talmud (500 C.E.), as reflected in the vast Halakic and Agadic literature. Consequently, the several hundred articles included in the first volume containing the letter *Aleph*, elucidate numerous episodes in the history of the period and illuminate many phases of that literature itself. Moreover, since the Talmud and the Agadic books not only serve us as historical sources, but also as the basis of many religious institutions, the nature and character of these institutions are also drawn into these discussions. As a result, we can hardly speak of the *Ereḥ Millin* as a dictionary or even as an encyclopaedia. Both of these terms would not apply to the articles included there which bear rather the character of essays. Rapoport was in such cases not an encyclopaedist who summarizes the results of the investigations of others on certain problems, but a pioneer in the field of Jewish learning who had first to prepare the material, then classify it, examine it critically, and finally draw the conclusions; and as a result the articles were often expanded into short treatises.

As it is impossible to give even a fair notion of the content of this work for it would engage us into a discussion of numerous historical and literary problems, we shall only describe the range and

extent of some of the more important articles. Thus the article, "Agada," discusses in twelve pages the character of the Agada, its various phases, and the attitude of the redactors of the Mishnah and the Talmud towards it. The subject is, however, not exhausted here. It is taken up again in the article, *Aftarta*, which occupies thirty pages. In it Rapoport first defines the word to mean the close or the conclusion of the synagogue service, and then discusses its several applications in life and literature. It connotes both the reading of a portion from the prophetic books on the Sabbath at the close of the reading of the Law in the morning service and also the sermon or the homily delivered by the teacher at the end of the services. This brings him to the discussion of the homiletic portions in the Aramaic translations of the Bible or the *Targumim*, and from that he proceeds to the cycle of the readings from the Pentateuch on Holidays and special Sabbaths, and thence to the analysis of the Midrashim, especially of the *Pesikta* cycles. (Vol. I, Sec. 84). The result of these investigations was the clarification of an important section of Jewish literature. This is supplemented by another article of ten pages on *Berakot* (Benedictions)—published separately, but intended to be included under the letter *Beth* in the dictionary—where Rapoport endeavors to show that the term *Berakot* was much more inclusive than the notation of liturgical benedictions, but that it often connoted homiletic remarks delivered on special occasions as in the house of mourners. He thus discovers for us another source of Agada and in addition throws light upon the origin of certain portions of the liturgy, especially the *Kaddish*.

In the article, "Adrianus" (Hadrian), the author discusses all the events of the Jewish rebellion against Rome during the reign of that emperor and the wars of Bar-Kokba, as well as the persecutions of Hadrian. Some of his conclusions bearing upon the dates of that episode proved erroneous, but his interpretations of historical texts in Talmudic literature and his critical examination of them are masterful. The article, *Alexander Makedon* (Alexander of Macedon) occupies fifty pages and deals with several important matters, such as the legends and stories about Alexander in Talmudic literature and the beginning of the Seleucide Era (Vol. I, Sec. 5) employed by the Jews for thousands of years. In fact, the bulk of this article is devoted to that question. The discussion touches upon a number of related things, such as the calculation of the Jewish calendar and similar matters which are of great value to scholars in different fields. In

the article, *Matres Lectiones*, i.e. letters employed as signs indicating the correct reading of words instead of vowels, the whole question of the introduction of the vowels into Hebrew is analyzed and examined and its late origin proved by numerous citations from Talmudic and Rabbinic literature. Typical of the all-embraciveness of some of the articles is the one, *Ereẓ Yisrael*. In this article the discussion touches upon the following subjects: the boundaries of Palestine according to Talmudic literature, its political and geographical divisions, the life of the Jews during the Talmudic period, the study of the Torah, the influence of the Holy Land on the Diaspora, the language spoken by the people, the love entertained by Jewish scholars for Palestine, and the difference in religious customs of the Jews of that country and those of Babylonia. From these few examples, we can gauge the all-inclusiveness even of the first volume of that work, and the grandness of the scale on which it was planned but unfortunately not completed.

We can hardly estimate the great erudition and the mastery of the entire Jewish literature displayed by Rapoport in this work, but here as in his biographies, the value of the work is enhanced by his critical method. With great skill he marshalls his arguments upon the questions in hand based upon passages drawn from the wide Talmudic literature. Some of these passages seemingly bear no relation to the question, but upon analysis and frequently after correction and emendation, turn out valuable historical sources. His keenness of mind in the interpretation of texts is often astounding, but at times he oversteps the limit and offers far-fetched suggestions displaying more scholastic casuistry than a scientific treatment of subjects. Such infrequent exceptions, however, do not reflect upon the importance of Rapoport's contribution to Jewish knowledge. Suffice it to say that many of his articles in the *Ereẓ Millin* became subjects for bulky tomes by succeeding scholars.

The first volume of the *Ereẓ Millin* contained, when first published in 1852, only the letter *Aleph*. Rapoport, however, wrote a number of scattered articles on subjects subsumed under other letters of the alphabet, some of which were published in periodicals, and some as parts of introductions to works of others. These were included in the second edition of that work published in 1912.

Of great value is also the collection of letters by Rapoport published in 1884 by Shealtiel Graber. It contains forty-seven letters sent by our author to his friend Samuel David Luzzatto during a period of

twenty-seven years, from 1833-1860. The letters are, in reality, essays on various subjects in Jewish history and literature and deal little with personal matters. Only here and there do we get a glimpse of the personal lives of the correspondents. However, the little that is revealed is important, as it reflects the characters of these two leading scholars of the last century. The letters deal with all branches of Jewish literature, Biblical, Talmudic, the *Targumim*, the *Masora*, sacred poetry, and with numerous other problems. Rapoport, who was more rationalistically inclined than Luzzatto, took issue with the latter on his attitude towards Maimonides and Abraham Ibn Ezra and his insistence on the unity of the Book of Isaiah. He championed the later origin of the chapters XL-LXVI in Isaiah and vigorously defended Ibn Ezra and his commentary on the Pentateuch against all attacks of Luzzatto. His discussions of the question of the various Aramaic translations of the Pentateuch, the prophets and the Hagiographa, their language, character, and time and place of composition, are of great importance. In the course of the discussion he dwells upon the *Peshitta* or the Syriac version of the Old Testament and suggests that it was originally composed by a Jew but that it was accepted later by the Syrian Church and was interpolated by Christians. The suggestion was later adopted by many scholars in this field. Of great value are also his researches on the *Masora*, the origin of the vowels, and allied questions. The letters thus form the third contribution of Rapoport to several branches of Jewish knowledge.

The last of his works called *Or Torah* (The Light of the Torah) is a detailed criticism of Geiger's *Urschrift* (Sec. 78) in which Rapoport, defending the traditional view of Judaism, points out numerous errors in the former's reasoning and shows the baselessness of many of his conclusions. In this work our author displays his mastery of the field of Biblical knowledge which was as extensive and as deep as his grasp of the other branches of Jewish literature.

Besides these four works, Rapoport wrote many essays, published in the periodicals of the time, which dealt with almost every period in Jewish history and all important problems in Jewish literature. In his characteristic manner, he penetrated to the very core of the subjects discussed and with his usual keenness in the examination of sources shed new light upon historical events or upon certain phases of literary activity. He thus became the master of Jewish knowledge in his day to whom scholars turned for advice and in-

formation. Some of them often asked him to write scholarly introductions to their own works or to the works of ancient authors edited and published by them. He seldom refused such requests, and as a result, we have a number of his essays published in the works of others. The most important of these are his essay on the life and work of Abraham bar Ḥiyya ha-Nasi, astronomer and philosopher, published in Freimann's edition of his *Hegyon ha-Nefesh* (Vol. I. Sec. 177); an introduction to Gaonic literature published in David Cassel's edition of *Teshubot Gaonim Kadmonim*; a collection of Gaonic Responsa; a survey of the history of the development of the science of grammar and lexicography among the Jews, together with the biographies of the leading grammarians, published in S. Stern's edition of Solomon Ibn Parḥon's *Maḥberet ha-Aruḥ* (Vol. I. p. 178); and an essay on astronomy in the Talmud included in Ḥayyim Selig Slonimski's work *Toldot ha-Shamayyim*. In all these introductions, he made valuable additions to the subjects discussed and his essays, as a rule, enhanced the significance of the works.

From what has been said, we can gauge the extent and depth of the influence of Rapoport on the scholars of his day and on the course of development of the group of studies which we call collectively "Jewish Science." His influence on his generation was enhanced by the fact that he wrote his works, with few exceptions, in Hebrew. His works were thus made accessible also to students of Eastern Europe and to the hundreds of Maskilim and would-be scholars of Russia and Galicia. He became the teacher and guide of many Talmudic scholars in these countries, who following in his footsteps and utilizing his critical method, added their own contributions to historical and literary studies. Suffice it to say that there is hardly one of these later scholars who cannot be called a disciple of Rapoport in a greater or lesser degree.

75. NAḤMAN KROCHMAL

Zunz and Rapoport undoubtedly laid the foundations of modern Jewish learning in the first half of the last century. Their influence was great and extensive upon those who followed in their footsteps. But there was at the time another man whose literary productivity during his lifetime was limited and whose published works could hardly compare in quantity to the works of the others, and yet his influence on the development of Jewish studies equalled theirs. In fact, it was he who first pointed out to Rapoport the way he was

to follow in life and it was his counsel and advice which guided the latter on his road to fame. That man was Nahman Krochmal (1785-1840). In his lifetime he was often called the Mendelssohn of Galicia, for like the sage of Berlin, he acted as a source and fountain of knowledge to a large number of young men in that province of Eastern Europe, who acknowledged him as their teacher and leader. He helped them in their studies, encouraged them in their struggles for enlightenment, and directed their first steps into various literary fields chosen by them. From among this group of young men who clustered around Krochmal, there came forth such men as Rapoport the scholar, Isaac Erter (Sec. 31) the satirist, Meyer Letteris the poet, (Sec. 33), Samson Bloch (Sec. 32), and many lesser lights, all of whom made important contributions to modern Hebrew literature in particular and to Jewish knowledge in general in one form or another. He thus was the teacher of a generation of writers and scholars whom he influenced both by sharing with them the vast amount of Jewish and secular knowledge he possessed, and by the idealism, sincerity, and purity of his great personality. His influence, however, did not terminate with his life, for when his life-work, *More Nebukē ha-Zeman* (The Guide of the Perplexed of our Time) was published in 1851, Krochmal became the teacher and guide of generations of scholars in various fields of research, for incomplete as the work is, it contains original contributions to Jewish thought, history, and literature.

Krochmal was born in Brody, a large city in Eastern Galicia. His father, Shalom Krochmalnik, was a rich merchant who, on various occasions, visited Berlin, and there made the acquaintance of the leaders of the Haskalah and even met Moses Mendelssohn and David Friedländer. Due to these circumstances, young Nahman was raised in a more liberal atmosphere than the one which usually prevailed in the homes of orthodox Jews at the time. His education, however, differed little from that of other Jewish children, as it consisted only in instruction in Talmud and codes, while officially he was supposed to receive a secular education. His mother paid an annually stipulated sum for the privilege of freeing him from attendance at the government school for Jewish children. He managed though to learn the rudiments of the German language by himself, and through association with several well-known Maskilim who lived in Brody, such as Baer Ginzburg and Mendel Lewin, he acquired a love for the Bible and the Hebrew language, the study of which he

pursued assiduously. He met no opposition in his efforts towards self-education in these subjects and consequently he did not possess that bitterness and animosity towards the fanatics and the rigid Orthodox, which was a part of the character of most of the Maskilim of the period.

At the age of fourteen, he married and went to live with his father-in-law, Shemarya Hoberman, at Zolkiev, a town not far from Lemberg. In the manner of the time, he was supported by the former, and consequently had ample leisure to devote himself to study. He was helped in his efforts by one of the enlightened of the day, Baruch Zebi Ney, who occupied the position of teacher at the Normal School at Zolkiev. Ney befriended the young man who was thirsting for knowledge, opened his library to him, and guided him in the acquisition of the knowledge of languages. It did not take long and Nahman mastered German, French, Latin, and several Oriental languages. Through the *Guide* of Maimonides, he entered the halls of philosophy, which discipline appealed especially to his speculative mind; and besides the ardent study of Mediaeval Jewish philosophy, he devoted himself also to the mastery of Kant, Fichte, Schelling and the entire German philosophy of the day. Thus he spent ten years of his life in acquiring knowledge and wisdom, both Jewish and general.

His assiduous study undermined his health and in the summer of 1808 he was attacked by a serious illness from which he recovered slowly. As a result, the physicians forbade him to pursue his studies, especially that of philosophy. It was then that Krochmal entered upon the third stage in his life, that of teacher and head of a "peculiar" academy. His name as a man of great knowledge in all branches spread not only in the small town of Zolkiev but also to the neighboring large city of Lemberg and other communities, and from all sides, men in search of knowledge and enlightenment began to visit him. Among them were young men who begged for instruction in elementary matters, as well as older men, such as Rapoport, Erter, Bloch, Bodek, and their like. These older men came for discussion and conversation. The conversations were often held in the fields around Zolkiev, where, in the manner of the ancient Peripatetics, the company of disciples and their teacher took their walks and discussed all manner of topics relating to Jewish and general studies. The sessions of the academy lasted, at frequent but irregular intervals, for many years, and some of these discussions

were later made the basis of essays both by the disciples and the teacher, so that as a result we find a certain similarity of views, and we cannot determine exactly their original propounder.

In spite of the injunction of the physicians against intensive study, Krochmal continued to absorb learning, except that he turned more to historical studies than to philosophy. He also took part in the social life of the community, for he served as the head of the Jewish community of Zolkiev for several years. In general, he adapted himself to his environment and conducted himself as all pious Jews, so that even the fanatics could not find fault with him. Yet they knew that he belonged to the enlightened and finally made an attempt in the year 1816 to stamp him as a heretic. Krochmal corresponded with a Karaite Hakam of a neighboring city and was on very friendly terms with him. The fanatics obtained one of these letters, and making many copies of it, circulated it among all neighboring communities, thus proving Krochmal's inclination to Karaism. He then wrote an apology where he explained his actions and views on his relations with the Karaites, and likewise circulated it in many copies. The Apology, which was his first writing, made a good impression and increased his fame.

The years following that incident brought many tribulations to Krochmal. The death of his parents-in-law forced him to search for a livelihood and he became a farmer of the tax on distilled liquors in the district, which business distracted him from his studies, and in addition he was unsuccessful and became involved in debts. His older children left him; his daughter married a physician by the name of Horowitz and went to live in Tarnopol, and his older son Joseph went to Russia to study medicine. This chain of vicissitudes culminated in the death of his beloved wife in 1826. In order to fill the vacancy which thus entered his life, Krochmal began to occupy himself with literary work and even thought of publishing some of his writings. The silence of Krochmal during all these years of study and learning was a problem to his friends and admirers. Some of his former disciples became famous through their writings, while their guide and mentor was still unknown outside of Galicia, except to a few scholars. He was repeatedly appealed to by his friends to share with the world his vast knowledge, but he persistently refused. Only in the last ten years of his life did he began to publish some of his articles. Several of them were published in the form of letters in the periodical *Kerem Hemed* (Sec. 27). Of these, the most im-

portant is his polemic against Luzzatto in defense of Maimonides and Ibn Ezra. But his chief concern was to prepare for print his great work to which he gave several titles. In 1836 he wrote to Luzzatto that he was occupied in the preparation of his work *Shaarē Emunah Zerufah* (The Portals of the Pure Rational Faith) and that he hoped to publish the first part within a year. His hope, however, was not realized, for at the end of the year 1836 he was compelled to give up his business and look for a new means of livelihood. He went to Brody where he was aided by his friends. He stayed there for two years, occupying himself either in tutoring or bookkeeping, and later went to live with his daughter at Tarnopol. During his short stay in that city, a call came to him from the Berlin Jewish community to become their rabbi, but Krochmal, whose love for independence was characteristic, refused the offer. He devoted himself entirely to his work, but his health gave way and after a short illness he died in August 1840. His death made a great impression upon the literary world and his disciples and colleagues, Letteris, Rapoport, and Isaac Baer Levinsohn (Sec. 34) wrote lengthy eulogies in poetry and prose in the periodicals of the day. Before his death he ordered that his manuscript be sent to Zunz with a request to edit and publish it, which the latter did. It was issued in 1851.

From the man we shall now turn to the book. It is the irony of fate that this work, which now goes by the name of "Guide for the Perplexed of the Time," should present perplexity and confusion as to its name and original intention. This arises from the chaotic form in which the manuscript was left due to the premature death of the author. Zunz, the editor, received the manuscript in an incomplete manner and had to arrange it and prepare it for the press. The chapters were not arranged in order nor was any definite title given to the work by the author. There was a kind of provisional title page which gave the name as *Shaarē Emunah Zerufah*. We saw above that in his letter to Luzzatto, Krochmal called his book by that name. On the other hand, Dr. Horowitz, Krochmal's son-in-law, and several of his intimate friends testified that it was the intention of the author to call it *More Nebukē ha-Zeman*. Zunz, therefore, compromised and placed the latter as its title and the former, with certain modifications, as sub-title reading as follows—*More Emunah Zerufah u-Melamed Hokmat Yisrael* (The Teacher of pure Truth and the Instructor of the Wisdom of Israel). The term *Hokmat Yisrael* is frequently used by the author as a term indicating

the subject of his book. Zunz, however, employed the terms *Emunah Zerufah* and *Hokmat Yisrael* as denoting the two main subjects of the book, namely the religious philosophy and the historical studies. Passing over the details of this discussion,⁶ we can come to the conclusion that the name *More Nebukē ha-Zeman* was the original title intended by the author, and *Emunah Zerufah* was only used by him as the title of a part of the book, or merely as an explanation of one of the main subjects of which the work treats. This inclusive title possesses great significance.

Like all titles, it reveals to us the purpose Krochmal had in mind when he wrote this treatise which was the result of many years of study and meditation. He intended, in imitation of Maimonides, to reshape Judaism and reconcile it with the spirit and philosophy of the modern world just as the former had attempted to bring it in harmony with the philosophy of Aristotle in his time. This quiet scholar and thinker, who spent most of his life in a small town in Eastern Galicia but absorbed much of the wisdom of the West, felt the rift between these two world views and sensed the danger imminent to Judaism when in conflict with modern thought and believed that he was able to obviate it. He himself was confronted by that problem and wrestled with the contradiction between the religion of his fathers and the thought and science of the modern world, and it seemed to him that he found a way to solve this problem; and consequently he wanted to guide and help others along this way. He was especially interested in helping young men who, like himself, were raised in the orthodox tradition and were saturated with the study of the Talmud, but after tasting of the fruits of secular knowledge began to forsake Judaism and minimize its value. He believed that by showing them the eternal rational values of the pure Jewish religion they would remain in the fold and contribute to the development of Judaism rather than escape from it. This purpose is stated indirectly in the first four portals or chapters in the book which serve as a general introduction, and directly in many more places, among them in the following statement: "We have repeatedly pointed out," says Krochmal, "that the purpose of our work is similar to the one of the Rabbi (Maimonides) in his *More* in his time. We follow in our method of investigation in his path with no deviation except the one which we are compelled to adopt

⁶ For these, see the article of Lachower, in *Sefer Bialik*, Tel-Aviv 1933. Part IV, pp. 88, 25-27.

on account of the difference between his generation and its problems and our generation and its difficulties.”⁷

The last words in this quotation are important for the understanding of the method and the nature of Krochmal's work. He does not follow Maimonides in all his ways except in the one specified, but rather differs from him in most of his ways except in the general tendency of effecting a reconciliation between Judaism and the spirit of the time. To Maimonides, the problem was primarily a metaphysical and a physical one, namely how to bring the principles of the Jewish religion in harmony with the principles of reason and science in his time. As for the practical application of the precepts of the Torah to life, he merely had to find some rational reasons for them and all proved satisfactory to him. To Krochmal, the problem lay primarily in the historical and social aspects of Judaism. In other words, the son of Maimon was concerned mainly with principles and religious beliefs and not with the entire tradition of Judaism. Tradition and the mode of life of the group formed no problem in his days. The historical perspective was entirely lacking in his time; the influence of the group upon the individual was not understood, and his purpose was to improve mainly the individual. All this was changed in modern times when the historical view came to the front. This view does not see in tradition a homogenous thing sprung from one source at one time and one place but rather as something which has gone through a process of development and which consists of various layers. This view gave rise at the end of the eighteenth century to new sciences; the sciences of history, of criticism of religion, and also of Biblical criticism. The philosophy of the time again busied itself with the philosophy of history, determined the spirit and nature of nations, injected the social element in thought, and determined the contribution of nations and their traditions to civilization. All these affected the younger generation of Jews who revolted against their tradition, looked upon it critically and considered it obsolete without distinguishing between elements of greater and lesser value.

It is with this set of problems that Krochmal came to grapple. It was his intention to evaluate the entire tradition of Judaism, to show the contribution of the Jews, to discover the main characteristics of the Jewish spirit as it revealed itself in life and literature through the ages, and thus to find a way for the future activity of that spirit.

⁷ *More Nebukē ha-Zeman*, ed. Rawidowicz, p. 209.

As a result of this, Krochmal found himself compelled to transfer the center of gravity of his work from the philosophical-theological to the philosophical-historical. He did not, however, mean to neglect the former, but on the contrary, intended to construct a religious philosophy of his own which would undoubtedly have made his attempt at a reconciliation between Judaism—not merely the Jewish religion—and the modern spirit more complete. He intended to devote to this subject the second part of the *More Nebukē ha-Zeman*. Unfortunately, however, this was not carried out and we have only several chapters dealing with this subject, the sixteenth containing a résumé of the theories of logic following mainly Hegel's system which was supposed to be a basis for his philosophy of religion, and chapter seventeen dealing with the philosophy of Abraham Ibn Ezra whose views exerted a great influence upon the author. In fact, Krochmal refers several times to a number of chapters he intended to write which were to deal with the Kabbala, the philosophy of nature, the philosophy of the Absolute Spirit, i.e. on religion, and several more on historical subjects, but as said, they were not written.

Thus the book, as it lies before us, is incomplete and contains the following sections: (a) The first four chapters where the problems and the method for their solutions are stated; (b) the philosophy of Jewish history and a survey of the first three cycles of that history proper (Chaps. V-XI); (c) studies in the literary productions of the nation, namely the Bible, Halakah, and Agada (Chaps. XI, XIII, XIV), which serve as illustrations of the way the Jewish spirit manifested itself in great productions through the ages; and (d) the two chapters mentioned above which belong to the second part intended to deal with the philosophy of religion. To this may also be added Chaps. XII and XV dealing with Philo and the Gnostics respectively which properly belong to the second part, although they have some relation to the first part as special manifestations of the Jewish spirit when influenced by contact with the Hellenic culture. We shall now survey briefly the contents of the first abortive attempt at reconciliation of Judaism with the modern spirit and evaluate its contribution to Jewish knowledge.

Krochmal opens his introduction, which is intended to explain the purpose of his book, by describing three types of evils which undermine the healthy state of religious belief and practice. The first is excessive religious enthusiasm which ultimately leads to unhealthy mysticism resulting in disastrous consequences. The followers

of this tendency believe first that they possess secret teachings by means of which they are able to command the forces of nature, and second that the possession of these teachings raises them above the ordinary laws of religion and morality. The second evil is superstition which arises from the erroneous view of some men, who conscious of their inability to communicate directly with God, search for mediators between them and Him. These may be either angels or saints, but the results are similar. Around these central beliefs there arise and cluster many superstitions.⁸ The third is excessive subjection to the letter of the law and the neglect of the meaning of the precepts. This tendency often results in punctilious observance of the purely religious precepts while the moral and the rational ones are neglected, for the men believe that this kind of observance would earn them a greater reward. These deviations bring about reactions on the part of men who see their evil results. The reactions are materialism, denial of tradition, and abrogation of the validity of the precepts, in opposition to mysticism, superstition, and mechanical observance, respectively. We thus have before us several types of deviations in attitude towards religion, all of which are dangerous to true rational faith. What then is the remedy? To this question Krochmal answers that the remedy consists in the forming of the right concepts of the manifestations of the spirit in human life and of the purpose of the law. In other words, a modern version of the three ancient teachings in Judaism known as *Ma'asē Merkabah*, *Ma'asē Bereshit*, and the *Ta'amē ha-Mizwot* (Reason for the Laws). In the explanation of these first two terms, Krochmal follows Maimonides, namely that the first refers to rational theology and the second to philosophy of nature. It is in the study of these conceptions and their right interpretations that the solution of the problems in the Judaism of his day outlined above can be found.

After stating the problems and delineating briefly the nature of the desired solution, we might have expected Krochmal to begin with the solution proper. But he does not do so. Being a conservative man and not wanting to antagonize the believers of his time, he devotes a whole chapter to an apology for undertaking such studies altogether. He first proves that it is the fundamental characteristic of the human soul to convert sensations and perceptions into representations and then into concepts, and then he goes on to show that

⁸ There is no doubt that Krochmal intended by this description to characterize the Hassidic faction in Galicia.

even the founders of the Halakah followed along this line, and that their work consisted in the generalization and fixation of rules from which the particulars of the laws were deduced. Consequently, we are allowed to do the same in regard to religious beliefs and conceptions.

Completing the Apology, he turns to the definition of his method in solving the problems, which is as follows: The problems have arisen by deviations from the right way, or as it is called in the Aristotelian-Maimonidian language, the middle way, to two opposite extremes. The solution, therefore, consists in finding the right way of conduct. But here our thinker makes a great departure from the teachings of his model, Maimonides. To him the "middle way" is not the one which is equi-distant from the two extremes but is a kind of synthesis in which all contradictions disappear. This is reached by going back to the source of the original current in Judaism. On reaching that source, we will find that it contains neither excessive religious enthusiasm nor denial of spirituality, and similarly are the other contradictions dissolved. Here Krochmal uses Hegelian terminology which caused many of his followers to speak of him as a disciple of Hegel. In reality, his borrowing is limited more to terms than to content. What our thinker means by "going back to the source" is to follow the method of development in discovering the real nature of the spirit of Judaism and then trace its various manifestations. We note here the introduction of a new element—the historical. And it is this element which caused Krochmal to deviate from his original purpose indicated in the first two chapters, namely to develop his philosophy of religion. Instead, he launches upon a discussion of the development of a philosophy of history in general and of Jewish history in particular.

The fifth portal, entitled Meaning and Purpose, can serve as a basis for the development of his views of human history. In the discussion of the question of teleology in the world, he follows mainly Kant's ideas on the subject expounded in the "Critique of Judgment," but due to his belief in the certainty of the existence of a transcendental God comes to different conclusions. It is true, says Krochmal, that the fact that there exists in the world a law of causality by means of which we assume that every event which takes place in the world must be brought about by a cause which preceded it does not yet prove the existence of a purpose in the world. This series of causes and effects can be explained as mechanical, and it does

not necessarily follow that they are a result of a definite plan conceived by some external being, nor can we attribute any special wisdom to nature in its activity. Yet, when we contemplate the structure and form of living or organic beings, there is revealed to us a different type of causality, a purposive one. Here in the organic beings we see that each organ is not only adapted for its own function and end, but also to the end of the whole being serving as a means for the perfection of the other organs and of the organism. Moreover, we can hardly conceive any organ by itself except as a part of the conception of the organism as a whole. This proves to us the existence of a plan and purpose at least in certain activities of nature. And though this is no absolute proof for the existence of a Being external to the world who conceived the whole plan of the Cosmos, yet it gives us sufficient reason to assume His existence and to view the world as a chain of purposive causes and effects, the lower links of which serve as means for the perfection of the higher. Thus, for example, the mineral order serves as means for the one of plants, this in turn for the living, which again serves as a means for man, the highest link.

The ideas expressed in this chapter are not entirely new, for the argument from design is an old one, and in fact our author placed at the beginning of the chapter a Midrashic passage which expresses it explicitly. The contribution of Krochmal consists first, in his basing this argument on modern philosophical grounds, and second, in his application of the principle of teleology to the philosophy of history rather than to the philosophy of religion. It is very doubtful whether our author aimed to prove the existence of God by inserting this chapter as the first of the book proper, though he might have utilized its ideas also in that direction. The following chapters indicate his real purpose which is to prove, on the basis of the assumption of a purposive plan in nature unfolded in the various orders of being, that in the life of man who is the highest of the links there is revealed a constant progressive purpose and plan. That purpose is the development of the spirit. Here, in the concept of the spirit, Krochmal differs greatly from the view of the idealist philosophers, Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel. It is true that he borrowed much from the last one and used his terminology to a great extent, but the content of the concept is different. To Krochmal, the Absolute Spirit (*ha-Ruḥni ha-Muḥlot*), a term which he frequently employs, is not the Absolute Spirit of Hegel, but the God of Israel, who

created the world, who manifests Himself in human history, and supervises human actions. There is only a similarity of terms and partly of form between Krochmal and the idealist philosophers but not of content. His purpose was to show how it is possible to express the fundamental views of the pure Jewish faith in terms of philosophy, and consequently the two may be reconciled though not identified. We return to our author's philosophy of history.

The Absolute Spirit, which is the stay of all existence and the true reality, manifests Himself in the life of man, in all his activities, especially in his religious attitude. Even men who are on the lowest rung of the ladder of civilization express in their beliefs, imperfect as they are, a striving for the knowledge of the Spirit. The difference between idolatrous religious striving and that of pure monotheistic belief and even that of philosophy of religion is a difference of degree, as between that of the unconscious and the conscious. The unfolding of the spiritual in man consists in the progress of the self-consciousness of the spirit; the higher man rises in his development, the more conscious of itself his spirit becomes. It is also the variety in the degree of development of the spiritual in man which constitutes the principle of individuality. The spirit of man which is a part of the divine influence, acts to develop in each man his own characteristics, the sum of which connotes his complete ego. The spiritual force is in reality a general one common to the human genus as a whole, but in its revelation in life it divides itself into various forms each of which is peculiar to every individual. However, important as the individual may be, we can learn of the manifestations and the progress of the spirit in human life only through the history of groups of men or nations, for human societies are organisms of the highest type, and it is in such organisms that the great purpose and the plan of the Absolute Spirit is especially manifested.

Krochmal then passes over to the definition of the spirit of the nation. It was the divine will, says he, that men should live in social aggregates, for it is in such life that the development of the spirit could be best manifested and become self-conscious. This manifestation is again not of a general nature, but assumes different forms with each group or nation, and each form constitutes the national spirit of a certain nation. What then is this national spirit? This, says Krochmal, is the sum of all the spiritual qualities and properties which become the share and the heritage of the group in

the process of time. The qualities were originally a potential part of the personalities of the individuals of the group and were realized by a long process through mutual influence in different ways. At times, these qualities were the share of only a tribe or of a gifted family, but slowly they were transmitted to the other members of the group. These qualities are expressed in a number of ways, such as the development of arts and crafts, in the laws and type of social life, in language and thought, and, of course, in religious beliefs and the forms of divine worship. The general tendency revealed in all these spiritual manifestations which unites them into one whole is called the spirit of the nation, which, like the spirit of the individual, stamps all its activities with its peculiarity.

This spirit of the nation, containing all the properties and qualities of the group may sometimes express itself in a greater degree in a certain quality which becomes the dominant trait of the nation, as for instance the Greek spirit was especially distinguished by its aesthetic quality or the Roman by its emphasis on courage and law. This dominant quality, Krochmal says, is called in the Bible, the God of the nation, since the divine worship of a people which embodies its spiritual inclination expresses usually that particular quality. But strong as this quality may be, it is only a part of the entire spirit of the nation. Since the spirit of the nation is the thing which gives to the group its individuality and power of life, it follows that with its decline, the national life of the nation declines likewise, and ultimately it disintegrates altogether. This seems to Krochmal to be the law of human history. Nations rise, develop, and then decline and disappear. In case of the disappearance of a nation, the permanent elements of its spirit do not disappear with its physical disintegration, but are absorbed by the general civilization of the human genus. From this general law of history, our author excepts the Jewish people, and there begins his philosophy of Jewish history.

The Jews, says Krochmal, are eternal. The reason for their eternity is that the dominant part in their national genius or spirit is the striving to unite with the Absolute Spirit or God. This excellence in matters of religion or belief is a matter of selection by divine wisdom, but it, of course, has undergone a process of development in time like the spirit of other nations. The difference consists in this, that the qualities and properties of the Jewish spirit are arranged in a more proportionate way and are influenced by the central striving to recognize the Absolute Spirit or the true reality. Israel was,

therefore, the first people to search for the truth, and the conception of truth and its propagation became its function in life and, in a way, its mission. But, as said, this quality was the result of historical development, and it became the share of the entire nation only after many struggles and much suffering.

It is this peculiarity which caused Jewish history to deviate from the law prevalent in the life of other nations. It is eternal, for its ideal and goal, the Absolute Spirit, is eternal. True, it was subjected to vicissitudes in its destiny, and in a way it followed the law of all nations, that of rise and decline, but due to its vitality, it did not disintegrate, but at the end of a period of decline it received a new lease on life and began a new cycle of history. It is to the description of the cycles of Jewish history and to the delineation of the manifestation of the Jewish spirit in all phases that the next three portals are devoted.

Krochmal, following the views of his time, divides the history of nations into three periods: the period of youth when its spirit first takes shape; the period of maturity when the qualities and properties of that spirit reach their fullest development; and the one of decline, when through certain causes, the nation loses its vigor and disintegrates. Accordingly, he sees a succession of such periods in Jewish history with the exception stated that when one cycle was completed, another cycle of periods began. The first of these cycles began with Abraham and ended with the destruction of the First Temple in 586 B.C.E. Its periods were: from Abraham to the entry of the Jews into Canaan, 465 years; from that date to the division of the kingdom after the death of Solomon, 477 years; and from that time to the destruction of the Temple. During the first period, the spirit of the nation began to develop and take shape through the events of the Exodus and revelation at Sinai. These acts, which took place by divine grace, only actualized the potential qualities of the Jewish spirit which were latent in the individuals of the nation and placed before it a great ideal, namely the striving to recognize the Absolute Spirit. It is this striving which is the peculiar characteristic of the Jews and which preserves them throughout eternity. During the second period, great things were accomplished; Palestine was conquered; the tribes were united into a nation; the Temple was built; and the time of Solomon was the climax of the period, for then not only was the temporal situation good, but even the spiritual reached a high state, as literature flourished and unity of effort prevailed.

The third period marks the decline; national unity again was disrupted, idolatry and imitation of the ways of other nations set in, and the result was political disintegration of both kingdoms. Krochmal is not unaware of the great spiritual activity of the prophets during this period, yet he calls it one of decline on account of the disruption of the unity of the nation and the low state of morality which prevailed in both kingdoms, and the assimilation of some of the tribes among the nations. The activity of the prophets only helped to preserve the general spirituality of the nation and thus bring about a regeneration and the beginning of a new cycle.

The second cycle began with the first exile and ended with the rebellion of Bar Kokba in 135 C.E. Its periods extended from the exile in 586 B.C.E. to the conquest of Palestine by Ptolemy Lagos in 306 B.C.E.; from that date to 63 B.C.E. when Judea became a vassal of Rome; and from then to 135 C.E., the last war of independence. The third cycle lasted from 135 C.E. to the end of the Jewish Middle Ages around 1750. Its periods of rise, maturity, and decline were as follows: The first from the time of Judah ha-Nasi to 740; from then to the end of the 13th century, when the great literary activity of the Golden Age terminated; and finally the span of time following that date. Here Krochmal is not definite and does not inform us whether a new cycle began with the Modern Period or not.

The entire three chapters of the historical survey are devoted to a delineation of Jewish history of the first two cycles, while almost nothing is said about the third cycle, except for a few statements about its division. It seems that our author considered the first two cycles of Jewish history which embrace the life of the nation in its own land as the most important, inasmuch as they expressed the typical manifestations of the Jewish spirit, and in the literary productivity of these ages, namely the prophetic and hagiographic books, the Halakah and the Agada, he saw the embodiment of the main characteristics of the Jewish spirit. It is for this reason that he delineates the events of the first two cycles in such detail.

The survey itself is a masterly one. Here Krochmal presents a complete view of Jewish national life during a period of close to two thousand years in all its aspects and manifestations, always with an eye for revealing the spiritual forces at work. He is especially interested in determining the general tendencies of the spirit of the nation from which the detailed incidents and episodes receive a new interpretation and are seen in the light of the whole. In other

words, he presents an organic view of Jewish history where plan and purpose are evident. The importance of his survey consists in the new philosophical conception of Jewish history which it presents, for while the other scholars of his time contributed much towards building up the frame of the story of the Jewish past, they did not attempt to develop a view of the whole process of the historical life of the people. Our author was the first to attempt it, though he did not by any means complete it. In this survey his aim at reconciliation of Jewish tradition with the modern spirit is in evidence. He accepts the traditional view that God selected the Jewish people for a special purpose and that He guides and supervises its destinies, but at the same time, he allows free play to the principles of development and the influences of environment. The activity of the Absolute Spirit is constantly manifested in Jewish history, but the greater part of the work is left to the nation itself, or more correctly, to its leaders through the generations. As a people, the Jews were subjected to all the laws of general human life operating in history, and consequently they often deviated from the right path and their life presents many aberrations. But as a people clinging to the Absolute Spirit, they were saved by that spirit from extinction and always preserved their integrity. This saving was not accomplished by miracles, but by the activities of the leaders of the people who were permeated by the divine spirit. It is this interplay of forces which resulted in the unity of the human and the divine, which Krochmal endeavors to elucidate in his survey.

In order to illustrate his view, he quotes copious historical details interpreting them in the light of his principles. This interpretation deviates much from the traditional opinions on the subjects which ignore entirely the principle of development. Krochmal consequently was forced to introduce the critical view on many matters of importance in Jewish history and literature, such as the date of certain parts of Biblical books, the nature of the oral law and similar matters. However, being conservative and not wanting to break with tradition, our author aims to reconcile his critical views with tradition, and to this purpose three chapters of the book which contain his historical and literary studies are devoted.

The first of these chapters (XI) is a collection of notes to the preceding chapters containing the historical survey. The purpose of these notes was to establish critically and by proof some of the suggestions made by the author in the course of his delineation of

Jewish history, during the first two cycles, which deviate from the accepted traditional view. These notes, though disjointed, shed much light upon many knotty problems in early Jewish history and Biblical literature. Thus, in some of them, Krochmal justifies his view of ascribing chapters XL-LXVI in Isaiah to a later prophet, as well as his relegating many psalms to late dates, even to the time of the Maccabean period. Of special importance are the notes dealing with the closing of the Canon of the Bible, the various stages of canonization, and the probable periods in which these took place. The views of Krochmal on these matters were not exactly new, for they had already been pronounced by Biblical scholars, both Jews and Gentiles. But what was new in his studies was the method of his proofs, and what is more, his attempt to reconcile them with tradition. By his great mastery of the sources and keen analytical mind, he was enabled to elicit from various Talmudic passages properly interpreted an agreement with the critical views, thus showing that true tradition is not averse to such opinions.

The other two chapters on the Halakah and the Agada are veritable treatises on these two important literary manifestations of the Jewish spirit. In his discussion of the Halakah, he displays both analytic and synthetic abilities. He analyzes the chronological sequence of the various parts of the oral law and describes the method of the *Sopherim* in their exegesis of the Bible, as well as their ordinances (*Takonot*); he then discusses the formation of the Halakah, the result of the exegesis, its phases and classes, and the exegetic method of the later scholars, the Tannaim; and finally he deals with the structure of the Mishnah. He discerns in this second great book of the Jews various layers and determines the dates of their stratification. All these views are illustrated by numerous examples from all parts of the Talmud. The important thing is here too the method and the endeavor to find the general rules and norms from which the various branches of the Halakah can be understood and conceived. As a result, we really obtain in this chapter a complete view of the development of the Halakah during the centuries. Krochmal himself felt, though, that this branch of Jewish study needs a more detailed treatment and promised to do so in a later chapter which, however, was never written. Yet this chapter alone is sufficient indication of the penetrating view of the author into the unfoldings of the Jewish spirit. It bristles with original opinions and remarks which were incorporated by succeeding scholars in works on Halakic studies.

The chapter on Agada is distinguished by the same qualities as the one on Halakah. It delineates in a few pages the nature of the Agada, its purpose, and character. Krochmal, unlike Zunz and Rapoport, was more concerned with the essence of the Agada than with the discussions about the compilation of its literature. He, therefore, described the various methods and devices used by the Agadists or the moral teachers, such as the different kinds of parables, the exaggerations, the similies, and other forms of expression. This description facilitates the understanding of that literature and removes difficulties in the interpretation of many Agadic statements. Equally illuminating is the sketch of the development of the Agada from early times to the close of the Talmud. In the Agada, as in the Halakah, Krochmal follows the philosophic method, which is to find the general principles, and in the light of these explain the details.

The twelfth chapter, dealing with the philosophy of Philo, and the fifteenth, treating of the views of the Gnostic sects, are connected in a certain degree with the preceding chapters, since they expound the doctrines which had arisen among the Jews simultaneously with those of the Halakah and the Agada. By their content, however, they belong to the second part which was supposed to treat of the philosophy of religion. Especially is this true of the fifteenth chapter. Since Krochmal states explicitly that his purpose in reproducing the views of the Gnostic sects was to find in them some relation to the doctrines of the Kabbala, the teachings of which he aimed to treat extensively in the second part.

Both of these chapters contain little original matter, for they consist mostly of excerpts translated from the works of Neander on the development of the Gnostic systems and of those of Dähne on the Alexandrian Jewish religious philosophy. Krochmal only added some remarks on the influence of Philo's teachings on some of the views expounded in the Agada, the traces of which he endeavors to find in a number of passages in the Talmud.

The last two chapters (XVI, XVII) deal with philosophical matters and were supposed to introduce the second part of the book. The first of the two is an exposition of Hegel's principles of logic which Krochmal intended to use as a basis for a philosophy of religion, as the title of the chapter distinctly states. We cannot surmise how far he would have followed Hegel in his view, as the chapter is incomplete and is limited only to the definitions of some of the logical concepts. The second, entitled *Hokmat ha-Miskēn*, (The Wis-

dom of the Poor Man) gives an exposition of the philosophy of Abraham Ibn Ezra whose poverty was proverbial (see Vol. I, Sec. 127). It is a real contribution to the study of Mediaeval Jewish thought, for as is well known, Ibn Ezra did not write any special books on philosophy, but expressed his thoughts in hundreds of remarks scattered in his commentaries and numerous other works, and very often in disjointed fashion. To collect all these notes and remarks and construct them into a system required not only knowledge and skill, but philosophic insight and sympathy with this wandering thinker of the past.

We have now reached the end of our survey of the book which bears such an imposing title, *The Guide of the Perplexed of our Time*. There is no doubt that in the present incomplete form it does not fulfill its promise. Yet it is a great book and in its day it was really epoch-making for since it was written in Hebrew, it showed the way to many future scholars how to utilize their Jewish learning in a modern scientific manner. Krochmal did not entirely reconcile Jewish tradition with the modern spirit, but he prepared the way for such a reconciliation. He bridged many a gap between the views of the modern historians and those of Judaism by blunting the edge of many modern heretical views and showing that similar opinions were also held by earlier Jewish scholars. He widened the perspective of Jewish history by supplying it with a philosophical point of view which aimed to combine thousands of single data into one whole.

It is true that Krochmal did not give us the entire view of the whole of Jewish history as his work was not completed, but by applying the principle of development to the understanding of Jewish history, on the one hand, and by endeavoring to define the particular nature of the Jewish spirit and tracing its manifestations through the ages, on the other hand, he laid the foundation for such a view. We must not overlook also the actual contribution he made in the field of historical and literary research. His theories on the development of the Halakah, his analysis of the methods of the Agada shed much light on these subjects and were employed by succeeding scholars as a starting point for further studies.

Finally, we must note the influence of Krochmal upon modern Jewish thought. He is generally considered the first promulgator of the philosophy of Jewish nationalism which is secular in its content. This is not true, for the "Absolute Spirit" which he speaks of as manifesting itself in Jewish history, is no other than the God of

Israel, as we stated above, and he, like earlier Jewish philosophers, saw the special function of the Jewish people in its religious and moral excellence. But by his introducing a wider conception of Jewish history in general, and by defining the spirit of a nation to consist in the sum total of all the spiritual and intellectual activities of that group through the ages, he gave the impetus for the formation of such a philosophy. In other words, Krochmal changed the center of the individuality of the Jewish people from religion to a certain abstract concept which he named the spirit of the nation. It is true that in that spirit religion and morality are the most important elements, but they do not form the whole of it and leave room for other elements. It is in this sense that Krochmal can be considered the father of the modern Jewish view of nationalism.

76. ZECHARIAH FRANKEL

In the edifice of modern Jewish learning which was gradually being constructed by the scholars whose works we have hitherto surveyed, an important part was still missing; that was a thorough study of the field of Halakah and Jewish law. Rapoport contributed some important short studies to this branch in his *Erek Millin*; Krochmal, in his chapter on the development of the Halakah contained in *More Nebuké-ha-Zeman*, outlined the method for a penetrating investigation of this field, but nothing complete and comprehensive was accomplished. Halakah and Jewish law waited for their master-builder, and he appeared in the person of Zechariah Frankel.

Frankel made these subjects, in their fullest connotation, his special object of research, and it was his intention to cover the entire field from its earliest beginnings to its late development in the Middle Ages. He did not succeed in carrying out his purpose completely, but his numerous works in this branch of learning were epoch-making. He was the first historian of the Halakah and the first expounder of Jewish law in a modern scientific manner and spirit. He was fully equipped for his task, for he possessed extensive Talmudic learning, a critical and historical spirit, and great philological knowledge, especially in the classical languages.

His works can be divided into three classes: (a) those that deal with the early manifestations of the Halakah during the Second Commonwealth in the extra-Talmudical sources, namely in translations of the Bible, especially the Septuagint and other works of the Alexandrian Jews; (b) those which treat of the history of the Halakah

and the nature of the Talmud; and (c) treatises on important phases of Jewish law. He did not, of course, neglect other phases of Talmudic literature, for he also contributed much to the elucidation of the character of the Agada, but his Halakic and legal studies were his forte.

The earliest work of Frankel included in the first class was his *Vorstudien zu der Septuaginta* (Preliminary Studies of the Septuagint), published in 1841. As its name indicates, it formed only an introduction to a larger work. He says in his preface that his motive for undertaking these studies was to find in the Septuagint, one of the earliest Jewish literary documents of the period of the Second Temple, sources which would shed light upon the state of Jewish tradition in the time of the *Sopherim*. And verily, he did find corroboration for many Halakahs and for numerous Agadic views in this translation which indicated the antiquity of the laws and views. But he came to the conclusion that a complete conception of the influence of the Halakah upon Jewish life outside of Palestine cannot be formed unless a thorough study of this translation, which was the central point of the spiritual life of the Hellenistic diaspora, will be undertaken, and hence he termed his studies merely "preliminary."

This book, though only an introduction to further studies, is itself a contribution to the literature of the Septuagint which is of interest not only to Jewish but to all Biblical scholars. In the four chapters which it contains, Frankel threw light upon the origin, time, nature, and character of this oldest and important translation of the Bible. Basing himself upon the assertion made earlier by Ludwig Vises that the letter of Aristeas (Vol. I, Sec. 65), which tells that the translation was made by seventy elders sent from Palestine at the request of Ptolemy Philadelphus (284-246 B.C.E.), is pure fiction, and offering new proofs for such assertion, he proceeds to discuss the real nature of its origin. The result of the discussion is that the translation was not made at one time, but was the gradual outgrowth of the work of Jewish scholars in Alexandria in the course of their teaching the people the word of God. It arose from a need on the part of the people who no longer understood Hebrew and demanded that the Bible be rendered in the vernacular. At first, probably only translations of selected passages were current, but later in the middle of the third century before the Common Era, these were incorporated in a complete translation of the entire Pentateuch, and still later the other books of the Bible were rendered into Greek

by various translators. These translators, he asserts, were not Palestinian Jews but Alexandrian, and some probably hailed from other centers of Hellenistic Jewry. The determination of the nature of the origin and the manner of this translation helped Frankel to solve the important problem of the relation of the text of the Septuagint to the Hebrew Bible or to the Masoretic text. There are numerous divergencies between the two, and the question had long arisen as to what kind of text the translators possessed. Many Christian scholars and also some Jewish held that the Hebrew text of the Bible, possessed by the translators, differed greatly from the Masoretic, and since that text was much older than the latter, they concluded that the readings of the Septuagint are more correct.

Frankel refutes this view by asserting that the translators did not master the Hebrew language perfectly, and besides, the Hebrew text used was not strictly correct, for due to the lack of knowledge of Hebrew in Alexandria, there is sufficient evidence that they also utilized an Aramaic *Targum* as an aid in the understanding of Hebrew, and that *Targum* already contained differences from the Hebrew text which were probably introduced for purposes of elucidation. He also claims that the Septuagint was not canonized by the Jews of Alexandria and consequently the text was not guarded against errors and interpolations. All these shortcomings of the translators and the devices used by them were the cause of the numerous divergencies of the text of the Septuagint from the Masoretic. To these must be added also differences purposefully introduced by the translators, either on account of the impossibility of rendering Hebrew phrases and verses verbatim into Greek, or because they wanted to conform to a traditional Halakic or Agadic interpretation. These assertions are proved by Frankel by a critical study of the text of the Septuagint which covers all phases of the work, namely the way the Alexandrian Jews pronounced Hebrew, the Hebrew script of that time, the question of rendering the vowels by Greek letters, the extent of the knowledge of the translators of grammar, the methods of Scripture interpretation and Biblical exegesis. The studies are supplemented by copious illustrations of renderings of verses in the Septuagint which cannot be explained otherwise except on the basis of his thesis.

The general conclusions aimed at by the author follow, namely that the text of the Septuagint is by no means to be followed in preference to the Masoretic, and that the translation displays the great influence of the Halakic interpretation of the Bible as developed and

cultivated by the bearers of oral tradition in Palestine. To the determination of the extent of that influence, he devoted his second important work.

This work is entitled *Über den Einfluss der palästinischen Exegese auf die alexandrinischen Hermeneutik* (The Influence of the Palestinian Biblical Exegesis and the Alexandrian Method of Interpretation), published in 1851. In this work, Frankel goes into detail to show the relation of the early Halakah to the life of the Jews of Egypt as reflected in the Septuagint and in other works of the Hellenistic Jews, especially those of Philo of Alexandria. He finds the influence extensive and proves that though the Hellenistic Jews knew little Hebrew and derived their knowledge of the law mostly from the Greek translation, yet they had a sufficient acquaintance with the oral law as to follow it in their interpretation of the Bible. He proves this by the fact that all legal portions of the Pentateuch are, as a rule, translated not literally but in conformity with the tradition of the oral law. The occasional deviations in these writings from traditional Halakah also come in for examination and scrutiny, and our author endeavors to discover the reasons for such disagreements. The book is, on the whole, of a technical nature, but the results elucidate both the development of the oral tradition and the spiritual life of Hellenistic Jewry.

The treatise named *Über palästinische und alexandrinische Schriftforschung* (On Palestinian and Alexandrian Bible Study), published in 1854, completes his studies in this field. In this work, divided into two parts, Frankel sketches the methods of Bible interpretation in Palestine by the *Sopherim* and their followers, the Tannaim, on the one hand, and the allegorical exegesis of the Alexandrian philosophers, primarily Philo, on the other hand. In the first part he surveys the activities of the *Sopherim*, such as their way of applying the laws stated in the Pentateuch to life and their exegetical method; he further describes the first layers of the Halakah as well as the rules of Bible interpretation of Hillel, and closes with the outline of the ground work of the Mishnah. He then turns in the second part to the Alexandrian method of interpretation and shows how foreign it was to the Bible as compared with the Palestinian. The latter was motivated by a desire to make the law apply to life, direct and regulate it, and it arose out of the very life-springs of the people. In addition, it was based on a deep and sound knowledge of Hebrew and the Bible. The former originated in a desire on the part of the in-

tellectual Jews saturated with Greek philosophy to reconcile speculation with their religion, and even more to find in the Bible support for their speculative ideas. The plain meaning of the words did not admit such interpretation, and the method of allegory was invented. The aim of these people was not to find a way how to apply the law to life, for the law was not important to them, but to derive spiritual inspiration and mystic thoughts from the Bible. Hence they deviated more and more into strange paths of interpretation and allegorical vagaries. In order to give a clear conception of the method of the Alexandrian philosophic interpreters of the Bible, Frankel enumerates and describes its rules and regulations. He concludes by summarizing the results of the two ways. The Palestinian way, based upon the national life of the Jews and its literary treasures contributed to the preservation of the people; the Alexandrian, having no relation to the life of the masses and enveloped in a cloud of hazy and mystic ideas, led only to the dissolution of the very principles of Judaism.

The first part of this book served Frankel as a basis for his larger work on the history of the Halakah, while the second part affords us a glimpse into the spiritual world of the Hellenistic Jews and contributed greatly to an understanding of the philosophy and views of their great representative, Philo Judaeus.

The first book written by Frankel on Jewish law was *Die Eidesleistung der Juden in theologischer und historischer Beziehung* (The Oath of the Jews in its Theological and Historical Relation), published in 1840. It was practically his first published scientific work and its purpose was to help abolish the shameful and insulting forms of the special oath which was at the time administered to the Jews and known as the *More Judaico*. This oath was administered to the Jew not in the court-house but in the synagogue in the presence of three other Jews. In addition, the one who took the oath was often required to wear his burial garments, place his hand on the scroll of the law, and pronounce that no previous annulment of the oath, such as it was thought is made in the *Kol Nidrē* formula recited on the Eve of the Day of Atonement, was valid. These were only some of the precautions taken by the Mediaeval courts against the supposed tendency of the Jews to perjury. This form of oath was still practiced, with slight modifications, by all German governments. When the Jews of Saxony received in the year 1838 the status of subjects of the kingdom, they were obliged to pronounce the oath

of allegiance to the king and constitution, and the question arose whether to retain in that oath also the form of the *More Judaico*. It was decided to retain it in principle, but to modify it to an extent in practice. This discrimination grieved the Jews, and Frankel then wrote the book to prove the sacredness of the oath in Judaism.

The work contains three chapters, the first of which deals with the principle on which the oath in Jewish law, both Biblical and Talmudic, is based and the manner of its administration. Frankel points out that the oath in Judaism is based on the idea which is fundamental to the entire Jewish religion, that God is the source of all truth. The pronouncing of his name by a defendant as evidence of the truth of his statement is, therefore, considered a sanctification of God's name, and in fact, the Pentateuch commands the Jews to do so (Deut. X, 20). On the other hand, pronouncing God's name for the purpose of swearing falsely or even pronouncing it in vain is strongly prohibited (Exodus XX, 7 and Leviticus XIX, 12), for it is considered a desecration of His name and a denial of His essence, which is truth. From this conception there follows the sacredness in which the oath was held by the Jews. Its violation was considered not only a sin against fellow-men but primarily against God, and in this lies the difference between the oath in Judaism and that in other ancient laws and religions. With the other ancient nations, the oath was considered sacred because of the punishment which would be meted out by the gods for perjury; with the Jews the sacredness is an inner one. Punishment of course, follows, but not as a retaliation for the injury done by the perjurer to his fellow-men, but because he desecrated the name of God.

Oaths are of two kinds, direct and indirect. An oath is called direct, when one swears that he is telling the truth; an indirect oath is pronounced in the following form: "May God punish me if I do not keep my promise, or if the case was not as I stated." In most cases, however, it is of a promissory character for the future. Our author shows that the Biblical oath is mostly direct, and is primarily intended as proof of the truth of a statement regarding an act in the past, especially the oath administered by court or pronounced in the presence of the court. He then expounds the manner of the administration of the oath, and shows that it was according to Jewish law, a very simple one. It was either pronounced by the defendant himself or administered by the judge in a short formula. Later Talmudic law added some ceremonies such as the placing the hand on a holy

object, the Pentateuch or the phylacteries, while the oath is administered. There were, he admits, some codifiers who wanted to introduce more deterrent symbols in the ceremony, but these were not accepted. The result he arrives at is that the oath, whether direct or indirect, was always invested by the Jews with an inner holiness which emanates from the very conception of God with whom it is associated, and that, therefore, its administration does not require deterrent symbolism. He mentions though that an admonition of the gravity of the sin of perjury was usually pronounced by the judge.

In the second chapter, the author deals with the nature and the scope of the oath. He shows that the range of the oath,—whether Biblical or Rabbinical—was on the whole, limited. The court oath was used, as we have seen, primarily to corroborate a past fact, and only rarely as an aid for the keeping of a promise for the future. And since the Jewish religion was revealed by God, it follows that every Jew is obliged to observe all laws, whether purely religious or ethical. Oaths were, therefore, limited to civil cases and not to criminal, or to such matters where the infringement of a religious law or an ethical obligation is involved. Thus witnesses were not administered an oath in court, for it is their religious duty to tell the truth; and what is more, the moment they are suspected of telling a lie, they are automatically disqualified from taking an oath. The reason why Jewish law obliges one who denies a part of a loan to take an oath is not because court suspects him of an intended denial, but because it assumes that his denial is only a means of delaying payment for a future time. A Jew, however, can administer an oath to a fellow-Jew that he should bear witness on his behalf, but not that he tell the truth. For the same reason, Jewish law does not know of an oath for judges or any other officers when they assume office, as they are supposed to be honest and act justly in accordance with the commandments of the Torah, and consequently, there is no place in Judaism for oaths of allegiance and the like.

Yet, continues the author, we find that Jewish law allows individuals or groups to take oaths to observe promises in the future as a means of assuring that observance. Consequently, it is the duty of the Jew in modern times, concludes he, to take the oath of allegiance and also when he acts as witness in accordance with the law of the state; but no special oath must be given to him since he is obliged to observe these things by the law of the Torah without an

oath, and he will certainly consider his promise sacred if an oath of the simplest form is administered to him.

Frankel then turns to show the falseness of the accusation made against the Jews that they annul all oaths in advance by the *Kol Nidré* formula, and for that purpose he discusses first the nature of the private oath, namely one which an individual makes outside of the court to assure the keeping of a promise for the future, as well as that of the vow, for the two are connected. He deals in detail with the different kinds of vows, and especially with the annulment of vows. He proves that this annulment among the Jews differs greatly from the one practiced by the Church. With the Jews annulment is not invested in the priests or scholars, but is merely a means employed by the individual to avoid the committing of a sin in case the vow or oath was made in haste and cannot be kept. The scholar is only to pass on the validity of the claim that the vow was made under peculiar circumstances, and that there is no intentional wish to disregard it. The *Kol Nidré* formula is likewise intended only for oaths and vows which a man imposed upon himself, but not for those which were administered to him by his fellow-men or any authority.

The third chapter, the longest in the book, consists of a survey of the development of the various forms of the special Jewish oath (*More Judaica*) in different European countries from early to modern times. He proves how they were all based on the assumption that the Jew is inferior to the Christian and that he possesses an inclination for perjury. Frankel concludes with an appeal to the governments to consider all that was stated by him in the preceding chapters regarding the sacredness of the oath in Judaism and abolish the insulting form of the Jewish oath.

The work of Frankel had the desired effect, and the *More Judaica* was discarded by the government of Saxony, a procedure which was soon followed by other German governments. It, however, should not be measured by its practical value at the time, but by its scientific quality. It was the first attempt to present in a systematic, scientific manner a phase of Jewish law, and to clarify its principles from the standpoint of both jurisprudence and the philosophy of law. Its content is still of value to students in that field.

Six years after the publication of his *Eidesleistung der Juden*, Frankel produced his second work on Jewish law, *Der gerichtliche Beweis nach mosaisch-talmudischem Rechte* (Court Evidence Accord-

ing to Mosaic-Talmudic Law). The purpose of this book was similar to the one of the *Eidesleistung*. Even in the fifth decade of the last century, when the Jewish emancipation was already around the corner, there still existed insulting discriminations against the Jews in the courts of various German kingdoms and principalities. In several of them, especially in Prussia, Jews were disqualified from bearing testimony in certain legal cases. The framers of the discrimination even claimed that they can justify their actions by proofs from Jewish law itself. It was then that Frankel wrote his comprehensive book on evidence in Jewish law, in order to let the laws speak for themselves and prove whether there is any justification in them for the discriminations or not.

The book is divided into three parts: (a) a long introduction giving the principles of Jewish criminal and civil law in general and those of procedure in particular together with their historical development; (b) a detailed exposition of the laws of evidence in code form, arranged in divisions, chapters, and paragraphs; (c) notes giving the sources and reasons for the laws gathered from the entire Talmudic and Rabbinic literature. As the body of the book dealing with the strict technical matters cannot be summarized, we shall limit ourselves to the introduction and attempt to give some idea of its content.

Frankel begins the first chapter of his introduction by a description of the purpose of law and the means it employs to attain its end. The function of law, says he, is to secure the life and property of every member of a state against attack or encroachment upon them by another member. Such attacks and encroachments are called transgressions. Transgressions are of different kinds, severe ones, usually called crimes, and lighter ones relating mostly to encroachment upon property. Prevention of the former is the object of criminal law and of the latter that of civil law. In civil law, the function of the judge is to determine the contested right and to discriminate between a real right and an apparent right. In criminal law, the function is to impose a penalty on the culprit in order to deter others from repeating such acts and also to vindicate justice. The culprit, though, when brought to trial is only a suspect and he also has rights in the eyes of the law. The purpose of the judge then is again to determine whether he has forfeited his right to life or freedom or not. In both cases, civil and criminal, certainty of facts is the fundamental condition for dispensation of justice. That certainty can be

attained by evidence. Evidence can be either rational, namely by deduction from the relation of cause and effect in a certain act, or more direct, by testimony of witness; the latter one is to be preferred. The theory of evidence in various law systems, however, is determined by the spirit of the system as a whole, and is subjected to the influence of the times, and also to the form of government. In monarchical countries where the right of the individual is not fully guarded, the theory of evidence is not favorable to him. In democratic states, it aims to secure his right as far as possible.

Turning from this general discussion of law and evidence to the subject of his work, namely the evidence in Jewish law, our author says that its investigation must begin by defining the spirit of that law, delineating its development in time, and determining its principles. Before all, we must form a general concept of the double nature of Jewish law. Its basis is Mosaic or Biblical, but that law underwent a further development the result of which is the Talmudic law. Consequently, the relation of the two elements must be established. He accordingly divides the first part of his work into three chapters: (1) on the spirit of the Mosaic-Talmudic law; (2) on the form of its procedure; and (3) on the sources of Talmudic law.

The fundamental characteristic of Mosaic law is that it was revealed by God; yet that fact does by no means detract from the rationality of its nature. God is indeed lawgiver, but there is no arbitrariness in the law, for he is the source of law and justice is His very essence. The purpose of the Torah was, therefore, only to realize in life the principles of right and justice inherent in the soul of men to their fullest capacity. God does not interfere in the dispensation of justice which is left to man. For this reason there is in Mosaic law no ordeals nor other forms of divine judgments with which we meet so frequently in other systems of law of the ancient peoples. There is only one exception, that of the *Sota*, i.e. the wife suspected of infidelity (Num. Ch. V). Nor does God interfere in the government of the State. He is supposed to be its head according to the Torah, but for several hundred years it had a republican form of government. Here our author enters upon a comparison between the conceptions of law in Judaism and in Christianity. Christianity, he says, in reality conflicts with the state, for it tells us to condone injustice while the purpose of the state is to punish it. Judaism, on the contrary, punishes injustice and condemns severely non-resistance to violence. Mosaic law aims to regulate life in society.

It is, though, as a revealed law wider in scope than the legal systems of states, for it embraces ethics. We have in the Torah such commandments as, "Thou shalt not hate thy brother in thy heart" (Lev. XIX, 17) and other such injunctions, the like of which are not found in any other system of law of human origin, which takes no account of feelings and emotions.

From this characterization Frankel turns to the spirit of the Mosaic criminal law and shows its pure humane character. In general, all crimes punishable by death are of such nature which other state laws also punish in the same way. Even the fact that several moral crimes, as well as idolatry and the desecration of the Sabbath are punished by death does not weigh against the assertion. The moral crimes are really crimes against society and idolatry is treason, for God is the head of the state. As for the desecration of the Sabbath, it was considered a species of idolatry, for such acts imply a denial of God's creation of the world. Purely religious crimes are punished by *Karét*, untimely death by a decree from heaven and do not fall within human jurisdiction. He further points to the clear conception of crime and punishment in Judaism as enunciated in the law of murder. In contradistinction to other ancient law systems, Mosaic law recognizes no monetary satisfaction to the relatives of the murdered, but insists on strict punishment which indicates a conception that murder is not a crime against the family but against society and God. He then passes on to lighter laws, those dealing with crimes that are not capital, such as theft, assault and battery, which result in bodily injury. He explains why theft is not considered by the Mosaic law a crime in the modern sense and is punishable only by a fine, and says that the reason for it must be sought in the view of the people at the time of such transgression. As for the harshness of the *lex talionis*, i.e. "an eye for an eye" enjoined in the Bible, he believes that this is merely an expression, a formula of application of justice rather than a commandment. Not only does the later Talmudic law interpret it to mean payment of money, but it is also probable that this interpretation was applied even in early times.

In the discussion of the Mosaic civil law, Frankel points out its simple character, for it was entirely adapted to an agricultural state where the relations of social life were not complicated. For this reason, Biblical civil law does not treat of many phases of law, such as those of acquisition of property, written documents, partners, mortgages, and many more. All these deficiencies were supplemented

later, and he therefore turns to the description of Talmudic law.

In the balance of the chapter, the author explains the method of interpretation of the Pentateuch employed by the founders of Talmudic law in their effort to make the written law apply to changed conditions of life and elucidates the principal modifications Jewish law underwent in its historical development in both its criminal and civil aspects. The main feature of Talmudic criminal law is its tendency towards mitigation of the strict demands of justice as expressed in the written code. No Biblical laws were abolished but they were greatly modified. There is noticed a special aversion to the infliction of capital punishment and consequently much emphasis was placed on evidence in such cases. The examination of witnesses was made thorough and rigorous. Talmudic criminal law continued to develop even after the right of its application in life was taken away from the Jews by the Romans. It was then more of a theoretical matter and, therefore, possesses an ideal character.

The case of civil law was different. This law was in practice during the entire history, and as a result was greatly widened. The more complicated conditions of Jewish life necessitated the extension of the Biblical laws, and even additions of many phases which the Bible does not touch upon. In general, says Frankel, the difference between the revealed civil law of the Pentateuch and the Talmudic consists in this: The object of the first is to obviate the encroachment upon a right, while the object of the second is to regulate the acquisition of rights, namely all those involved in commercial and industrial relations. Talmudic law, in the course of its development undoubtedly was influenced by the systems of the nations with whom the Jews came in contact, such as the Greeks, Romans, and Persians. But this influence is expressed not in mere imitation but in absorption of certain forms and incorporating them in its own body as parts of the fundamental conceptions.

The second chapter outlines the ways and methods of justice according to Jewish law. The author gives a detailed account of the various courts, their jurisdictions, and the procedure employed by them in both civil and criminal trials. The principal features of Jewish court procedure were that the trial was conducted in the form of an accusation and in the presence of the defendant, and that the emphasis was laid on the testimony of witnesses whose statements were scrutinized and tested rather than on circumstantial evidence. This method, says our author, is preferable to the method of trial

by investigation employed in other systems of law, for in the latter case, the probing of evidence rests primarily on the rational deductions of the investigator which are subject to error. In the oral procedure employed by the Jewish law, where the defendant is present, there is room for discussion and clash of opinion which is conducive to the establishment of truth. He points out that though Jewish criminal law did not know the institution of trial by jury, yet it carried out the purpose aimed at by that institution in another way. The criminal court consisted of twenty-three judges and a sentence of guilt could not be passed except by a majority of two which meant by unanimous opinion of thirteen men, a number exceeding that of the modern jury by one. We have then all the benefits of the jury system with the additional advantage that in Jewish law the decision was not only pronounced by a large number of men but that they were also men learned in the law and not drawn from the ranks of the ordinary citizens. For the same reason, our author says, we can justify the lack of the appeal in Jewish criminal court procedure. There was no necessity for it in view of the fact that the sentence was passed in accordance with both common sense and legal learning of thirteen men. In civil cases, where the trial was conducted by a court of three or even of one judge, an appeal was allowed.

In the third chapter, devoted to the sources of Jewish law, the author traces the development of all the stages of that law from the earliest times in accordance with the sources arranged in their historical order. He discusses the close relation of the much ramified Talmudic law to the written or Biblical and the various attempts at codification throughout history until the formation of the final code, the *Shulhan Aruk*.

The second part consists, as said, of the body of the book where all Jewish laws on evidence are stated in two hundred brief paragraphs. It contains two sections, the first dealing with evidence both in criminal and civil cases through witnesses, and the second with other forms of evidence applicable in civil cases only. The first section is further subdivided in three chapters: (a) on the nature and character of witness testimony and the duty of its deposition; (b) on the hearing of the testimony of the witnesses and their examination; and (c) on the qualification of witnesses. The four chapters of the second section deal with (a) the oath; (b) the confession of the defendant; (c) the evidence of documents; and (d) the proof by *Miggo*, namely the veracity we impute to an argument of the de-

fendant on the basis that he could have offered a more plausible argument and yet he refrained from doing so.

The notes giving the sources and reasons for the legal statements constitute the third part and occupy more than two-thirds of the entire work. The learning embodied in them is astounding. Not only does the author display a mastery of the entire Talmudic and Rabbinic literature, but also keenness of mind, a special sense of systematization, and an ability to abstract from complicated legal discussions their very essence which has a bearing on the decisions of the law.

The permanent value of this work far exceeds that of the *Eidesleistung*, for it covers a much larger field of law; the legal material it contains is enormous and the method of its elaboration and organization is both illuminating and comprehensive. It is still an unfailing source for a systematic study of Jewish law. In its day, it was epoch-making, as it was the first approach to the investigation of such a vast field as the Halakah from a point of view of both legal learning and historical research. It had also practical results, for like the first work of Frankel, it influenced the German law-makers to abolish the legal discriminations against the Jews. But, as said, the real value of the work rests on its intrinsic qualities.

The works hitherto surveyed contributed in a degree to the understanding of the development of the Halakah, that great branch of Jewish study which up to that time was as yet little investigated. But there was still a need for a comprehensive treatment of the subject, for works dealing with the entire Talmudic literature in a systematic and scientific manner, which aim to present a complete view of its contents, the organization of its parts, and the compilation and redaction of its principal divisions. This need Frankel undertook to fill in a number of treatises written by him in the last fifteen years of his life, covering the history of the most important portions of that literature. These works were written by him in Hebrew, as they were intended primarily for scholars conversant with the ways of the Talmud and immersed in its study, to whom Hebrew was still the best means for the conveyance of thoughts and ideas.

The first of these treatises was the *Darkê ha-Mishnah* (The Ways of the Mishnah), published in 1860. The work was originally planned by Frankel to cover the whole field of Tannaitic works, namely the *Mishnah* proper, the *Tosephta* and the Tannaitic Midrashim (Vol. I, Sec. 44), and was to consist of three volumes: the first, a general

introduction to the Mishnah, the second, a detailed discussion of the order and text of that work, and the third, an introduction to the other Tannaitic treatises. This plan, however, was not carried out, for while he was engaged in the preparation of the work, he became convinced that in order to make it complete he must devote himself to an intensive study of the Palestinian Talmud, a subject of great difficulty since that Talmud was not much commented upon by earlier scholars. This diversion to another phase of study prevented him from completing the other parts of the work planned, and he only published the first volume of the *Darkē ha-Mishnah*. He, however, enlarged the scope of this volume by incorporating subjects which were originally intended for the other parts.

The work in the present form consists of five chapters, the first of which is a kind of historical introduction to the entire work. In it the author surveys briefly the process of development of the oral law from the time of Ezra to the redaction of the Mishnah. He begins with the activity of the *Sopherim*, the first group of scholars who initiated that process in the early days of the Second Commonwealth, describes their method of interpretation of the Bible and the first layer of Halakot resulting from that method. This is followed by a description of the activity of their successors in the field of oral law, the "Pairs" (Zugot, Vol. I, Sec. 35) of scholars up to Hillel, and by an enumeration of their important ordinances. He concludes with a bird's eye view of the work of the Tannaim from Hillel to Judah the Prince, the redactor of the Mishnah, especially of their method of Bible interpretation or *Midrash*, the rules established by them for that purpose, and the relation of the *Midrash* to the practical application of the law, or the Halakah. Frankel does not discuss the origin of the oral law, whether it was handed down by Moses together with the written law, as tradition avers, or that it rose in response to the demands of life at the beginning of the Second Commonwealth. His starting point is the activity of the *Sopherim* and the conditions which prompted such activity. His silence on this point together with a remark that the origin of many of the Halakot, so-called Sinaitic (Halakah le-Moshe mi-Sinai), could hardly be traced to that source, but that the name merely indicated antiquity, aroused much opposition to the work in the ranks of orthodox Jews.

The second chapter, which occupies two hundred pages, contains a detailed description of the generations of *Tannaim*. It is the more important part of the book and elucidates the entire content of the

Mishnah, for it is the statements and the opinions of these men which form its material. A knowledge of their times is an absolute condition for a comprehensive view. With great ability, painstaking effort, and critical acumen, Frankel describes the older bearers of tradition from Simon the Just to Hillel, their nature, and character, the differences between the schools of Hillel and Shammai, and finally discusses in detail the Halakic contribution of later Tannaim. He does not neglect, though, to point out the views of these men on other matters besides law, such as on religion and ethics, so that as a result the work of the five generations of Tannaim, which forms about ninety percent of the entire contents of the Mishnah, becomes clear to us by the analysis of their characters, attitude to life, and methods of study. In connection with the main task, the author also throws light upon many other problems relating to the subject, such as the different religious practices of the people of Judea and those of Galilee, the places of various academies, and the ways in which discussions were carried on and differences of view had arisen. Frankel utilized to an extent the works of the Mediaeval scholars in the field (see Vol. I, Secs. 160, 190; Vol. II, Secs. 129, 134), but he improved upon them by his comprehensive and systematic treatment of the subject and penetrating examination of the sources.

The third chapter is devoted to the various redactions of the Mishnah, its different texts, and the sequence and order of the tractates. Our author discusses in considerable detail the two redactions which preceded that of Judah the Prince, namely those of Rabbi Akiba and Rabbi Meir, and the way in which parts of those compilations were incorporated in the last one. The problem of the texts of the Mishnah is taken up next. The Mishnah is found, as we know, in three versions; one published separately, and two contained in the Babylonian and Palestinian Talmuds respectively. There are a number of differences between these versions and Frankel catalogues them only for the eleven tractates of the first order of *Zeraim*. He also endeavors to explain the origin of these differences whenever possible. The discussion of the difference in the order of the tractates in the three versions of the Mishnah and also in the *Tosephta*, and of the reasons for such deviations in the sequence concludes the chapter. As ancillary to the main subject the author deals also with the problem of the way the Mishnah spread among the students whether as a written text or as an oral canon. This problem was a matter of controversy among Mediaeval scholars (Vol.

I, p. 429) and Frankel sides with those who held that the Mishnah was actually written down by Judah, while its study continued to be oral for several centuries.

The fourth chapter dealing with the rules of the Mishnah, that is the principles employed by the editor in the construction of this great canon, is probably the most important of the book. Frankel built up on the slender foundations laid down by the Mediaeval predecessors in their introductions to the Talmud, a real edifice of the methodology of the Mishnah. He established forty-five rules which lay bare before us the intricate construction of this important canon of the oral law composed of hundreds of statements and opinions of generations of teachers. The value of this chapter can hardly be overestimated. The fifth chapter is a critical survey of all works which serve as auxiliaries to the understanding of the Mishnah, such as the *Tosephta*, the Tannaitic Midrashim, the *Targumim*, the early Greek translations of the Bible, the history of Josephus and the commentaries. The last-named form the main subject of this chapter. His delineations of the character of the commentaries on the Mishnah from that of Hai Gaon to that of Bertinoro (Vol. II, Sec. 45) is a contribution to the knowledge of that branch of Rabbinic literature, and the first of its kind. Special attention is given by him to the commentary of Maimonides and all its phases are explained in detail.

The appearance of the *Darkê ha-Mishnah* made a great impression in the circles of Jewish scholars, but it also aroused much opposition on the part of the Orthodox party headed by Samson Raphael Hirsch. The opposition was based on several ambiguous statements of Frankel in the first chapter of the book, which may be interpreted to declare the *Sopherim* as the originators of the oral law, and also on his view regarding the Sinaitic Halakot mentioned above. The controversy created a whole literature at the time. Hirsch and his followers attacked the author and the book in numerous articles. The friends and followers of Frankel, among whom was also Solomon Judah Rapoport defended him in long essays, but Frankel himself was silent, and never expressed himself clearly on the question of the origin of the oral law.

The second great work of Frankel in the field of Talmudics was his *Mebo ha-Yerushalmi* (An Introduction to the Jerusalem Talmud), published in 1870. This work was the first attempt to approach a field of study which had been neglected through the ages. The Jerusalem Talmud was studied little by most of the Talmudic

scholars, and no adequate commentaries on it were ever composed, and consequently its text was full of errors. To provide a key to the portals of that Talmud, to elucidate its ways and character was the purpose of Frankel's introduction.

It is, like the "Introduction to the Mishnah," divided into five chapters. The first describes the conditions of Jewish life in Palestine during the third and fourth centuries, the period of the development of that Talmud, and also discusses the situation and the activity of the academies in the Holy Land during that time. The second chapter, dealing with the language and the style of the Jerusalem Talmud is of special significance, for it removes many a difficulty in the way of the student. The great obstacle to students was the particular language in which this Talmud is written. It is the Western Aramaic dialect which differs greatly from the Eastern Aramaic of the Babylonian Talmud, and it contains also numerous words borrowed from the Greek which was the vernacular of Palestine at the time. Besides, the pronunciation of Hebrew was different in Palestine than in Babylonia and in addition, that Talmud employs many particular expressions and abbreviations as well as various combinations of words. All these deterred the students trained in the Babylonian Talmud from approaching the Palestinian. With great skill, Frankel unravels all these mysteries, and places before the scholars rules for the language of that Talmud, glossaries of words and expressions, and many more aids which greatly facilitated its study.

From the form of the Talmud the author passes to its content, nature and character. This is discussed under four aspects. The first is the question of the texts of the Mishnah and *Baraitot* employed in it. Frankel believes that the Palestinian scholars had several texts of the Mishnah at their disposal and had the advantage in this regard over the Babylonian *Amoraim*, as it was easier for them to explain a difficulty in a Mishnaic statement by a better reading, and the same is true of the *Baraitot*. This is the reason for the many differences in the versions of the Mishnah in the two *Talmuds*. It is also partly the reason for the briefer manner of discussion of the Palestinian Talmud which is the second aspect. On the whole, says the author, the method of interpretation and study of the Palestinian Amoraim was more simple and direct than those of Babylonia, who were inclined towards dialectics. But on the other hand, they were not as keen as their colleagues in Babylon.

The main reason for this difference our author finds in the political conditions in Palestine in the fourth century which were oppressive and not conducive to intensive study. The other aspects discussed are the time and manner of the redaction of that Talmud and the nature of the Agada in it as compared with that of the Babylonian Talmud. As regards the first, it is the opinion of the author that the redaction was interrupted in the middle on account of the persecutions which explains its unorganized character, brevity of expression, and also its incompleteness. The printed Jerusalem Talmud contains *Gemarah* only to four orders of the Mishnah, none to the last two, *Kadashim* and *Taharot*, with the exception of fragments to a few chapters of the tractate *Nidda*. Whether there was also *Gemarah* to the order of *Kadashim* as it is found in the Babylonian but was lost later, was long a moot question. Frankel believes that the Palestinian Talmud was left incomplete. This opinion was proved wrong by the publication by several scholars of extensive fragments of the Palestinian *Gemarah* of that order.

Our author is also of the opinion that the Agada of the Jerusalem Talmud is inferior in beauty of style and flight of imagination to that of the Babylonian. It is, though, written in a pure Hebrew, being less mixed with Aramaic and its historical data are more correct.

The fourth and fifth chapters deal with the names and the order of the *Amoraim* in the Palestinian Talmud and with the commentaries on it respectively. In the former Frankel arranged in alphabetical order the names of five hundred and fifty Amoraim mentioned in that Talmud, most of them Palestinian. Each man is given a special article in which a brief characterization of his activity is given, illustrated by quotations and statements. The work of systematization and arrangement arouses our admiration, for it required not only a complete knowledge of both Talmuds, but also a keen discernment between texts, statements, and readings, in addition to an historical sense. The last chapter gives a survey of all commentaries on the Jerusalem Talmud, either on complete tractates or merely on single passages. The latter are contained in commentaries on or in compendia of the Babylonian Talmud, where the passages are quoted and expounded.

These were only the leading works of Frankel in the three fields. Besides these, he wrote numerous long articles in the *Monatsschrift* which was founded and edited by him for many years on many

subjects in this and related fields. The most important of the minor works are his *Grundlinien des mosaisch-talmudischen Eherechts* (The Foundations of Mosaic-Talmudic Law of Marriage) and the *Entwurf einer Geschichte der nachtalmudischen Responsa* (A Brief History of Post-Talmudic Responsa). The first is a detailed systematic presentation of the Jewish family law and the ethical principles underlying it. It was especially aimed against Holdheim's treatise *M'amar ha-Ishut* (Treatise on Marriage) where the exponent of reform wanted to find a basis for his views on the proposed changes in the Jewish marriage laws in the Talmud. The second is an introduction to the Responsa literature containing a survey of its periods, character, and the historical value of its contents.

The works of Frankel in the field of Halakah, Jewish law, Bible translation, and Rabbinic literature served as the basis for the activities in all these fields by numerous scholars who succeeded him. It is no exaggeration to say that without his books, the later more complete history of the oral law of Weiss and the chapters on the Talmudic literature in Graetz's history could not have been written, nor could the later works on Jewish law have been composed without his treatises. If we add to his works also the influence he exerted personally on a generation of brilliant students who later became leaders in various branches of Jewish knowledge, we can indeed speak of him as one of the great builders of Jewish learning in the last century.

77. SAMUEL DAVID LUZZATTO

The four men, whose works we have surveyed, made important contributions in various fields of Jewish learning and opened up new vistas in their branches of literary activity. The work, however, was far from complete and much was still to be accomplished. There were fields of Jewish learning which were hardly touched upon, such as Hebrew philology and Bible exegesis. The attempt in these directions made by the scholars of the first generation of the Haskalah period were undoubtedly praiseworthy, but they were not thoroughly scientific nor comprehensive. Again in the field of poetry, emphasis was laid primarily upon the religious poetry of the Franco-German Jewries, while the genuine poetic productivity of the singers of the Golden Age of Spain was still unexplored because of lack of material. Nor was even Zunz and his collaborators able to explore sufficiently their own field of religious poetry for the very same reason. Many

collections of *Piyyutim* were still lying hidden in libraries, and rituals of different Jewries were still unknown. Likewise, in the field of history and literature, there was felt a considerable lack of sources, and Rapoport and his followers often laid down hypotheses without being able to substantiate them by facts based on documents. The filling of all these gaps in the various fields of Jewish learning was the work of many scholars during two generations. But there was one man whose many-sided activities in almost all fields of Jewish knowledge formed the first important layer in the closing of these gaps. That man was Samuel David Luzzatto. His chosen field was Hebrew philology and Bible exegesis, and he can be considered one of the builders of that branch of learning. But imbued as he was with love for Judaism and all the manifestations of the Jewish spirit, his interest for the entire Jewish literature in all its ramifications was great, and he spent a lifetime collecting rare books and manuscripts. Though poor, he used most of his money for that purpose and circumstances helped him to accomplish his aim. He lived in Italy, a land where the first Hebrew printing press was established, where many first editions of books were still found, and where a number of private libraries, which harbored these books and many precious manuscripts, were in existence. As professor of the *Collegium Rabbinico* in Padua, he was in contact with the scholars of the land and with the owners of the libraries and was thus able to discover many treasures of Jewish literature.

He was, however, not a mere collector of books and manuscripts but employed them to great advantage. He edited and published a number of valuable books with notes and introductions, supplied critical notes to editions of poetical and historical works edited by others, and what is more, copied hundreds of poems and also many historical documents for other scholars in the field, thus supplying them with materials and sources. All the leading scholars of the first generation, such as Zunz, Rapoport, Jost, Geiger, Dukes, Michael Sachs, and others were under obligation to him. It was due to him that Zunz was enabled to further his researches in the field of religious poetry, that Rapoport could continue his investigations in the history of Talmudic, Rabbinic, and Mediaeval literature. It was Luzzatto who first issued the *Diwan* of Judah ha-Levi's poems, who first copied hundreds of poems of Moses Ibn Ezra and sent them to Leopold Dukes who published them. It was he who furnished Geiger and Michael Sachs with numerous poems by ha-Levi, Gabirol, and other Spanish poets

for their studies in the field of Jewish poetry. He was thus one of the first and important factors in the development of the history of the poetry of the Golden Age. He was similarly instrumental in developing other special studies by furnishing material to scholars and adding notes to their works. Luzzatto contributed to all the learned Hebrew periodicals of his time, beginning with the later volumes of the *Bikkurē ha-'Ittim* in 1829, and ending with the *ha-Maggid* in 1865, as well as to many periodicals in German, Italian, and French. In addition, he conducted an extensive learned correspondence with all the scholars of his day of which the Hebrew letters alone occupy over fourteen hundred pages. These letters contain numerous essays and small treatises on various subjects, besides hundreds of notes and comments of a philological and exegetical nature. If we add to these a considerable number of published and unpublished treatises and commentaries, we can gauge both the extent of his literary productivity and its diversified nature. It is, therefore, impossible to give even an adequate conception of the character of his works and still less to summarize them. We shall therefore limit ourselves to a mere delineation of their main characteristics.

Luzzatto's literary activity in general was expressed in three classes of works: (a) essays and treatises on problems and questions of Jewish theology and fundamental views of Judaism; (b) books on Hebrew philology and Biblical commentaries; and (c) editions of classical books and essays on historical, literary, and poetical subjects, including introductions and collections of notes to the works of others. As we have already outlined his views on Judaism and Jewish theology contained in the first class of his works, we need not revert to them again, and we will therefore turn to the second class.

As we have seen above, Luzzatto's love for the Hebrew language and the Bible was deeply rooted in his soul and expressed one of the fundamental traits of his character. It was therefore natural that he should turn to the study of these subjects at a very early period in his life, and in fact, he began both his philological investigations and his exegetic activity even before the age of twenty. He continued his work in these fields for the rest of his life, devoting to it especially the thirty-seven years during which he taught Bible and the Hebrew language in the Rabbinical Seminary at Padua. He made his important contributions to Jewish learning in these branches.

The most important works of Luzzatto in the field of Hebrew

philology are: (1) studies in Hebrew synonyms first published in the periodical *Bikkurē ha-'Ittim* and *Kerem Hemed* which later formed the second part of his *Bet ha-Oẓar*; (2) prolegomena to a Hebrew grammar; (3) a Hebrew grammar; (4) a grammar of the Biblical Aramaic and the idioms of the Talmud; and (5) the *Oheb Ger* (The Friend of the Proselyte, with reference to the fact that Onkelos was a proselyte), a treatise on the method, text and style of the *Targum* of Onkelos of the Pentateuch. His three grammatical works were written in Italian, and the other two in Hebrew. In all these works, Luzzatto displayed his mastery of the Hebrew language and the principles of its grammar, together with great linguistic penetration in the nature of the kindred Semitic languages, especially the Aramaic and the Syriac. His Aramaic grammar was the first attempt in this field by a Jewish scholar in modern times, thus opening up a path for further studies on the subject.

Of still greater importance were his two Hebrew books. In his treatise on the Hebrew synonyms, Luzzatto displayed a remarkable keen sense in the understanding of the meaning of Hebrew words and their nuances. His distinctions are finely drawn, and as a result he enriched the use of the language; and what is more, these studies really laid a basis for his Biblical exegesis, for his discernment between the meanings of words explained many passages in the Bible.

Of great value is the *Oheb Ger*. It was the first scientific study of that important translation of the Bible. The book proper is divided into two parts. The first deals with the methods used by the translator in rendering the text of the Pentateuch into the vernacular in a way which agrees with tradition and yet is free from all the faults which such a rendition entails. It was recognized long ago by Maimonides and others that the translator was careful to remove all antropomorphisms from God, and consequently changed many such expressions by a more rational rendering. Luzzatto was not satisfied with this explanation for that would not account for all the changes in the rendering. He therefore painstakingly searched through the entire *Targum* with the view to discover the aims and purposes of the translator in making such changes. He came to the conclusion that the translator used at least thirty-two devices in order to make the translation rational and intelligible to the masses who could not understand Hebrew. It was, says Luzzatto, his general aim to render the Pentateuch in such a way as to remove any misunderstanding of any expression affecting either the purity of the God-conception

or the dignity of the Jewish people, or the honor of the patriarchs, or any other doubtful meaning which might arise from the Hebrew idiom or peculiarity of the ornate style. Some changes were made in order to agree with the traditional interpretation of the oral law (for some of these devices see Vol I, Sec. 72). The study of Luzzatto presented the *Targum* in a new light and enhanced its value greatly. He was, however, mistaken in following the traditional view and asserting that Onkelos and Aquila were two different persons, and that the Aramaic and Greek translations were composed at different times. He, due to the influence of Rapoport, later accepted the more historical view and admitted that the *Targum Onkelos* was only an improved version of Aquila's Greek translation (see Vol I., Sec. 72).

The second part, which constitutes the bulk of the book, is devoted to a critical examination of the text of the *Targum*. Using eight early editions of the *Targum*, two manuscripts, and making many collations with excerpts quoted in works of Mediaeval scholars, he succeeded in correcting hundreds of readings in as many passages, and thus purified the text from errors and paved the way for a critical edition of the *Targumim*. He later added a long appendix to the work where he discusses the relation of the two Aramaic dialects, the Syriac and the Aramaic proper, and explains many difficult words in the translation, the meaning of which escaped earlier students on account of their ignorance of the Syriac.

Besides these works, Luzzatto also wrote numerous articles on the subjects of grammar and lexicography, the most important of which are those on the history and development of the Biblical accents. His view of the accents and vocalization points (Nekudot) was a critical one. He came to the conclusion that both the vowels and the accents were unknown in the time of the Talmud and that they were introduced in Gaonic times. This view which was contrary to the traditional belief^{8a} he defended vigorously against his critics in a number of essays, and though he erred in his assumption that the vowel and the accent systems were invented in Babylonia, his theory of their late origin was corroborated by later investigation. His views of the late origin of the vowel and accent systems influenced, as we will see, his exegesis and also served him as a starting point in other studies.

His works in the field of Bible exegesis are: a commentary on the

^{8a} With the exception of Elijah Levita (Vol. II, Sec. 8) all earlier grammarians believed the vowel points and accents to be either of Sinaitic origin or that they were introduced by Ezra.

Pentateuch and the *Haftarot* under the name of *ha-Mishtadel* published in Busch's edition of the Pentateuch in 1849; a commentary on the Book of Isaiah published together with his Italian translation of that book in 1856; notes and comments on the Books of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Proverbs of Solomon, and Job, published posthumously in 1876 under the name *Perushē Shadal* (The Commentaries of Shadal, i.e. Samuel David Luzzatto, the usual abbreviation of his name); and notes on Isaiah published as an addition to Rosenmüller's commentary on that book. All his commentaries, with the exception of the last one, were written in Hebrew. To his exegetical works should be added his Italian translations of the Books of Isaiah, Job, the Pentateuch, and finally his translation with the cooperation of his disciples, of the entire Bible. In these translations, there are incorporated the results of life-long exegetical studies.

In order to gain a conception of the character of Luzzatto's exegesis, we must first understand his attitude towards the Bible. This attitude can be described as a modified orthodox one. He believed implicitly in the Sinaitic origin and the revealed character of the Pentateuch. He also believed in the holiness and authenticity of the prophetic books, but he made a distinction between these books and the Pentateuch. The text of the latter, he asserted, was scrupulously guarded through the generations against any error, while the text of the former, though sacred, was not as zealously guarded. Consequently, there are no errors in the text of the Pentateuch, but some might have crept in the text of the prophetic books. He furthermore believed, as we noted, that the vowel points and accents system were introduced late, and therefore their authority is not absolute, and we must not always follow them, especially in such cases where the vocalization and accentuation opposes the plain meaning of the verses. As a result of this attitude, Luzzatto allowed himself to interpret verses in disagreement with the accents, and moreover, to amend the vowel points and even the words themselves in exceptionally difficult passages. A number of his emendations became famous and were accepted by most of the Bible scholars and exegetes. All these emendations and changes, however, were limited only to the other books of the Bible and did not extend to the Pentateuch.

In his exegesis, Luzzatto aims to elicit the plain meaning of the words in accordance with the grammatical rules and the Hebrew idiom for which he had such a fine sense. He deviates, at times,

from the accents if the meaning is not clear even in the explanation of the verses of the Pentateuch, and occasionally also from that of the interpretation of the Halakah. In reply to his orthodox critics who took him to task for such deviations, Luzzatto explained that he did not mean to imply that the Halakic interpretation is incorrect, but that the verse has also another interpretation in accordance with the meaning of the words and general sense of the sentence. He pointed out that even Rashi and Samuel ben Meir (Vol. I, Sec. 112) had deviated, at times, from the explanation of the Halakah.

Luzzatto revered the older commentators, especially Rashi, who was his typical ideal Jewish sage. Yet he did not hesitate from rejecting his interpretation or that of any other exegete if it did not stand the test of truth. On the other hand, though he criticized Abraham Ibn Ezra severely for his philosophic views, his free spirit, and especially for the tendency to conceal his true views, yet he accepted his explanations quite frequently. In general, Luzzatto exhibits in his exegesis a conservative but a true and independent spirit.

His belief in the authenticity of prophecy and that the prophets were able to foresee the future greatly influenced his exegesis. He defended vigorously the unity of the Book of Isaiah and ascribed all chapters from XL-LXXVI, with the exception of nineteen verses, to Isaiah. He consequently interpreted these chapters in the spirit of that prophet. He likewise opposed the views which advocated the insertion of passages or chapters of later origin in the works of earlier prophets. His attitude towards the Hagiographa however was different. He agreed to the view that Ecclesiastes was not the work of Solomon and that the views expounded there are of a sceptical nature, and that it was included into the Canon only after some changes were made in those views. He, likewise, did not believe the Book of Psalms to be entirely Davidic, but opposed the views of his colleagues who ascribed some Psalms to Hasmonean times.⁹

On the whole, Luzzatto's exegesis forms his important contribution to Jewish learning, for his commentaries display not only a mastery of the Hebrew language, grammar, and idiom, but an exceptionally keen penetration into the spirit of the Bible and are permeated by the spirit of the search for truth. They represent the fruits of the work of a lifetime of a man who was not only equipped with all the necessary qualities of an exegete, but was saturated with an overwhelming love for the Bible and its message.

⁹ See his letters in *Kerem Hemed*, Vol. 8.

The works of the third class, consisting of a large number of essays and collections of notes and comments, cover a variety of subjects in the field of Jewish literature. There is hardly a branch of Jewish knowledge which Luzzatto did not enrich by his remarks and notes. Many of these essays were collected in volumes, some published during his lifetime and some posthumously, but a number are still scattered in the various learned periodicals to which he contributed. Of these collections, the important ones are the *Bet ha-Ozar*, Part I and Part II, published in 1847 and 1889 respectively, and the *Peninē Shadal* (The Pearls of Shadal) published in 1887. Both of these contain essays on all the subjects mentioned.

Of the smaller works published separately, the most noted are the *Vikkuah 'Al ha-Kabbala* (A Debate on the Kabbala), the *Abné Zikkaron*, and the *Nahlat Shadal* (The Heritage of Shadal). The first is a valuable contribution to the studies of the Kabbala, its origin and the nature of its teachings. The treatise was written by Luzzatto in his youth but was published many years later (1852). In it he analyzes the important theories of the Kabbala and shows their late origin and that they are not in agreement with the fundamental views of the Jewish religion. He also scrutinizes the composition of the *Zohar* and comes to the conclusion that its imputed antiquity is not authentic, but that it was composed by a Kabbalist in the thirteenth century. His general view of the Kabbala is that, like philosophy, it is an aberration from the main current of Jewish teachings; and moreover, that it is only a mystic interpretation of the views and principles of that philosophy with additions of many irrational elements.

The second treatise is a collection of epitaphs on tombstones of famous men who lived in Toledo, Spain. These were recorded in an old manuscript from which they were copied by Joseph Almanzi and published by our author. The importance of the work consists in the notes of Luzzatto which shed light on the biographies of many illustrious men of Israel. The third work contains two tables: (a) of the Babylonian Gaonim and the earlier Rabbinic scholars; and (b) of the leading *Paitanim* and their *Piyyutim*, both valuable contributions to Jewish history and history of Jewish literature.

A great service to Jewish literature was performed by Luzzatto by his edition of collections of the poems of the singers of the Golden Age and other poets. His love for Hebrew literature and his poetic soul—for as we know, he was himself a poet of no mean talent—

made him choose Mediaeval Hebrew poetry as one of his favorite subjects. With remarkable patience, he spent many hours of labor in explaining a difficult line in one of these poems or emend a word or a letter in order to correct the defective manuscript. His favorite poet was Judah ha-Levi in whose thought and feelings he recognized a kindred spirit. He, therefore, devoted himself to ha-Levi, first publishing, in 1840, the *Betulat Bat Yehudah* (Virgin Daughter of Judah) a selection of poems, and the first part of the poet's Diwan in 1864. The valuable features in this edition are the notes and emendations of the editor. With his keen linguistic and poetic sense he divined the right meaning of the poems and produced the proper emendation or explanation. His notes and remarks were incorporated in later more complete editions of ha-Levi's Diwan. The interest of our scholar, though, extended to all Spanish poets and also to the religious poets of the Franco-German Jewry and he labored as painstakingly at commenting their poems as those of ha-Levi. He emended and annotated hundreds of poems and sent them to scholars who labored in that field, and also wrote notes to editions of the works published by others. The best known among them are his notes to Letteris' edition (Sec. 32) of Moses Ḥayyim Luzzatto's drama, *Migdal 'Oz*. A collection of religious poems copied from old manuscripts and annotated by him was published posthumously under the name of *Tal Orot*.

All these enumerated works, however, form only a part of the contribution of Luzzatto to the field of Jewish Mediaeval poetry, for, as stated, much of it is incorporated in the works of others. In general it can be said that he opened the portals of that literature, in a sense, even wider than Zunz. The latter limited himself mainly to the Paitanic activity, while Luzzatto was equally interested in secular poetry.

We cannot take leave of Luzzatto without devoting some space to his large collection of Hebrew letters (Igrot-Shadal) published posthumously in the years 1882-1894 in nine parts. It can be considered the crown of his works, for more than any other, it shows his scholarly versatility and the wide and all-embracing range of his knowledge. The collection contains six hundred and ninety letters exchanged between him and all the other scholars of the generation, both the older and the younger. There is hardly a scholar of note with whom Luzzatto did not correspond. The names of Rapoport, Reggio, Zunz, Schorr, and Geiger head the list of correspondents,

and they are followed by those of Jost, Dukes, Steinschneider, Michael Sachs, Senior Sachs, and Graetz, besides a host of lesser lights. The letters cover a period of fifty-three years, from 1812 to 1865. The earlier deal with family matters as they were written by Samuel David, when a mere boy, to his father and other members of the family. In the year 1818, when our author had attained the age of eighteen, there began the learned correspondence, which was continued uninterruptedly for forty-eight years.

The collection, as a whole, is a veritable encyclopaedia of Jewish learning in its diversified character. The contents can not be summarized, as the hundreds of letters deal with every branch of Jewish knowledge. They contain essays on mathematical, astronomical, philosophical, historical, poetical, theological, and philological subjects, and the erudition displayed there is overwhelming. The collection, besides being a great scholarly contribution, possesses exceptional value for the understanding of the complicated character of Luzzatto, as it reflects all the phases of his great soul which is revealed to us in its beauty and glory, as well as in its less attractive features. His personality was, on the whole, of a heterogenous nature. It united deep reverence for tradition together with a critical attitude towards it, love for Mediaeval Jewish literature with a certain disregard for its value, admiration for the great men of the past with an occasional minimization of their importance, a passion for truth with a slowness in retracting an error, humility with an excessive consciousness of his own worth, and other contradictory features. Thus while he consistently defended the integrity of almost every book in the Bible and considered even the Hagiographa divinely inspired, yet he allowed himself to say that the author of the Book of Chronicles did not understand the plain narrative of the Book of Kings in several places.¹⁰ He revered Ibn Jannah as one of the founders of the Hebrew grammar, and yet he writes in a letter to his son, after hearing of Munk's blindness: "Henceforth, instead of explaining the works of Mediaeval scholars, Munk should devote himself to the production of original works which will flow out of his own soul, one greater than that of Maimonides and that of Ibn Jannah."¹¹ He also expresses himself in the same letter as follows: "Were I to become blind, I would consider it no misfortune, as then

¹⁰ *Iggrot* Part VI, p. 698.

¹¹ Letter to his son, Philoxenus, dated March, 1853, quoted in *Samuel David Luzzatto, ein Gedenkbuch zum hundertsten Geburtstage*, Berlin, 1900. p. 107.

I would devote myself to my own work rather than to those of Mediaeval writers whose worth is inferior to mine." Still he repeatedly asserts that he is happy to follow in the footsteps of the men of earlier ages. He frequently parades his love for truth and his readiness to confess an error. He even made an anagram of his pen-name *Shadal* which reads *she-Mode 'Al ha-Emet* (One who confesses the truth), and yet he persistently defends his views with all casuistic means in face of plausible objections; it was only when he was absolutely convinced of his error, that he did not hesitate to acknowledge it. He spent a lifetime in exploring the treasures of Mediaeval Hebrew literature. Still he says in one of his letters to Steinschneider, that his explanation of verse 5 in Chapter IX of Isaiah is worth more than all the manuscripts in the Bodleian library. He constantly professes his humility, and yet he reproaches severely in his correspondence those scholars who criticized his works, or failed to acknowledge them as the expression of absolute truth.

All these contradictions and incongruities in Luzzatto's personality can be explained by several of its fundamental traits. These were: real passion for truth, knowledge of his own worth, love for all things Jewish, especially for the Hebrew language and literature, and his innate piety. He had a great passion for truth, or for what he conceived as truth. If he was once convinced of the truth of an opinion, he fought for its acceptance with might and main, sparing neither the feelings of his friends nor the honor of the great men of the past, no matter who they were. This trait explains his attacks on Maimonides and Abraham Ibn Ezra, and his dilatoriness in retracting errors. He was not, however, entirely impervious to change of opinion, for his critical bent of mind made him test any judgment many times, and though often prejudiced in favor of himself, he revised his opinions, stating so frequently, when they did not stand criticism. His consciousness of his worth, though justified, was undoubtedly excessive. He believed himself sent by providence to teach the real truth of Judaism to his generation, and when he found himself thwarted in the realization of his mission by the spirit of rationalism permeating the works of the German-Jewish scholars, he was not only chagrined but became convinced of his duty to combat it. He saw himself the guardian and champion of Judaism and hence his frequent conflicts with the other Jewish scholars of his time which are reflected in numerous harsh utterances against them in his correspondence. His profound belief in the value of his

literary achievement is pointedly expressed in the judgment he pronounced on his own work: "I will write my words down, and if the generation will not be worthy of them, I will leave them to my successor who will publish them after my death."¹²

His love for the Hebrew language and literature and all that was Jewish was all-pervading. For the sake of furthering Jewish knowledge, he was ready to forgive men their wrong views and overlook their opinions, though he considered them injurious, and to correspond with them and help them in their work. Thus, he condemned Jost for his radical views very severely and in his letters to Rapoport he calls the former heretic and says, "I hate and despise Jost, and as long as I live I will continue to hate him."¹³ Yet nine years later when that scholar wrote to him asking for help in his work, Luzzatto replied in friendly terms. He tells him openly what he thinks of his views, but that on account of his knowledge and his scholarly work, which raises the prestige of the Jews among the nations, he respects him and is ready to become his friend. The correspondence between the two continued for many years. Luzzatto also corresponded with Schorr, Geiger, and other scholars of whose radical views he was quite aware and greatly disapproved. He interrupted his correspondence with Geiger only after the appearance of the *Urschrift* (Sec. 78) which expressed extreme radical views of the Pentateuch, but even then he remained his friend. His love for the learning of these men covered many of their faults and sins against Judaism in the way Luzzatto conceived it.

In his love for Hebrew, he forced many German-Jewish scholars to correspond with him in that language, often stipulating it as a condition for their correspondence. Occasionally, however, he corresponded with them in other languages. In the second collection of his letters, those written in European languages, entitled *Epistolario*, there are numerous letters to Steinschneider in Italian and to Geiger in French. This collection is likewise a great contribution to literature.

In conclusion we can say that Luzzatto is best characterized by his own words, "Judæus sum, nihil Judæci a me alienum puto" (I am a Jew, and nothing Jewish do I consider strange to me);¹⁴ but we may add that everything Jewish not only was not strange to him, but that he loved it with all the ardent warmth of his great heart.

¹² Motto on title page of the *Iggrot*

¹³ *Ibid.*, Part II, pp. 170, 178.

¹⁴ *Iggrot*, Part VI, p. 780.

78. ABRAHAM GEIGER

The scholars hitherto considered were all exponents either of the conservative, or like Luzzatto, of the orthodox views of Judaism. It was left for the reform current in Jewish thought to make its contribution to the upbuilding of Jewish knowledge and learning and produce a man whose activity enriched all fields of Jewish studies by adding to them works of great importance. That man was Abraham Geiger, the moving spirit of the movement.

He, like Luzzatto, was interested in all the manifestations of the Jewish spirit through the ages, and with few exceptions, was interested in all branches of the so-called "Jewish Science." He was well equipped for the various tasks he undertook, for he possessed, besides an extensive range of knowledge in Semitic philology also a mastery of Talmudic, Rabbinic, and Mediaeval literature, as well as a fertile mind and a critical insight into the intricate affairs of past Jewish life. It is true that Geiger was dominated by a desire to justify by these studies his opinion on the need of change or reform in Judaism, and that this tendency often caused him to project his own views into the past and to present facts in a light more subjective than objective. Yet he possessed enough of healthy historical sense and good sound learning as to make most of his contributions of permanent value irrespective of that tendency which is evident in some of his works. Besides, there were whole branches of study, such as Hebrew philology and Mediaeval literature which were entirely free of that tendency.

His works cover the fields of Jewish history and almost all branches of Jewish literature with the exception of philosophy, and even touched on a new subject, which up to his day was hardly dealt with by a Jewish scholar, namely the influence of Judaism upon Christianity and Islam, especially the latter. They can therefore be divided into four classes: (a) works dealing with the last-named subject; (b) with the various phases of Mediaeval literature; (c) with the development of the Bible and the Talmud or rather the Halakah; (d) with the history and development of Judaism as a whole.

To the first class belongs his early work *Was hat Mohammed aus dem Judenthum aufgenommen*. This book published by him at the age of twenty-three, in 1833, as a doctor's dissertation, was in its time a brilliant contribution to a subject little studied. For a long time it held an important place in the studies of the Koran. Even today it has not lost its value as a source book for investigation in

this field as Prof. Torrey's book "The Jewish Foundation of Islam" shows.

Geiger's treatise is divided into two sections. In the first, he answers the questions propounded by him in the introduction: "Did Mohammed want to borrow ideas and views from Judaism; could he do that; and did such borrowing agree with his aims and purposes?" He answers the questions in the affirmative. The Jews at the time formed an important element of the population in Arabia, and their cultural influence on the Arabs was great. Mohammed both feared their power and learning and was anxious to gain their good will. Incorporation of elements of their religion and literature, he thought, would accomplish this purpose and in addition would help to spread his teaching among the Arabs themselves. The author further shows that the prophet was in frequent contact with Jews and conversed with their scholars and even cultivated their friendship. He often mentions in the Koran a Jewish scholar, Abdallah Ibn Sallam, with great respect, and we also know that the cousin of his wife, Khadija, a certain Waraka, was for a long time not only a proselyte to Judaism, but was well versed in the sacred writings. He could, therefore, easily gain information about Judaism from his friend and relative. Again the incorporation of religious elements from Judaism, Geiger proves, agreed perfectly with his plans. Mohammed never claimed that he came to give a new law, but only a new version and interpretation of the earlier ones. He insisted that he was the seal of prophecy or the last of the prophets. The inclusion of teachings and views from Judaism would only corroborate his words and validate his claims, for as a rule, he was careful to change the borrowed material somewhat. These changes, however, were not always due to the planned intention of the writer but often to incomplete or distorted information.

The second section deals with the material borrowed by Mohammed from Judaism. It is subdivided into three parts. The first enumerates fourteen concepts borrowed by the prophet from Jewish religious thought and literature. These concepts are embodied in terms employed in the Koran, the origin of which cannot be denied. Terms like *Torah*, *Gan Eden*, *Gehinom*, *Sabbath*, *Mishnah*, *Darash* (to interpret) and others, are not merely borrowed words, but express teachings and opinions, and when Mohammed employs them in exactly the same connotation as they have in the Talmud and Midrash, we have sufficient reason to assume that he borrowed them from Judaism through the mediacy of his Jewish friends.

The second part describes the religious, moral, and legal views borrowed by Mohammed from Judaism. The views of the prophet on creation, reward and punishment, immortality, Day of Judgment, angels and demons resemble so closely those of Talmudic and Agadic Judaism that their source can hardly be mistaken. With the exception of the gross picture of the life of the blessed in Paradise, all other views agree with those expressed in the Jewish Agada. These analogies are traced by Geiger in detail and are proved with copious quotations both from the Koran and Jewish literature. Similarly, our author shows the inclusion in the Koran of a number of Jewish legal rules and practices, especially those affecting prayer and family laws. Thus, to quote an illustration, Mohammed forbids a divorced woman to remarry before three months have expired from the time of separation exactly as the Talmud does.¹⁸ Likewise, we are told by our author, that several views on life and death found in the Koran emanate from Jewish literary sources, and even the parables illustrating these views are taken almost verbatim from the Midrash.

The third part which occupies more than half the book deals with the stories of the Koran. With great skill, Geiger traces the numerous tales told in that book about Adam and his sons, Noah, the Patriarchs, Moses, Saul, David, and Solomon to their sources in Jewish Agada. They are often given, as stated, in modified form or changed in important details, but their origin is quite evident. A short chapter on the polemics against Judaism in the Koran is added as an appendix.

The work as a whole displays much erudition and the cogency of its arguments is so impressive that its conclusions can hardly be shaken nor much added to them, even today after the lapse of a hundred years.

The works included in the second class dealing with Mediaeval literature consist of a series of essays and treatises on the lives and works of important Bible exegetes and on the poetry of the Spanish Golden Age, as well as on several other subjects. Geiger had a special predilection for the Franco-German school of exegetes of the eleventh and twelfth centuries and in his *Parshandata* (The Commentator of the Law), published in 1855, he discusses the character of the exegesis of that school as contrasted with that of the Spanish,

¹⁸ The reason for this regulation is that in case the woman gives birth to a child later, its parentage may be definitely determined.

illustrating it by special essays on the commentaries of Menaḥem ben Ḥelbo, Joseph Kara, Joseph Bekor-Shor, and Samuel ben Meir (Rashbam, Vol. I, Sec. 112). He also added specimens of their commentaries from manuscripts including a part of the commentary of Samuel ben Meir on the Pentateuch (on Gen. Chs. I-XVIII) which was hitherto omitted from all printed editions of that commentary. The Provence family of the exegetes, the Kimḥis (Vol. I, Sec. 114), the father, Joseph, and his two sons, Moses and David, also engaged his attention. In three brilliant essays written in Hebrew and published in the periodical *Oẓar Neḥmad*, he depicted their lives and activities, both as grammarians and exegetes, and their method of Bible commentation. A few shorter essays on certain commentaries ascribed to Joseph Kara and to Rashi complete his work in this field.

Geiger's contribution to the history of Biblical exegesis in Northern France and the Provence is of great value. He explored a field which was little studied up to his time and by his analysis of the character and methods of these commentators, and by publishing and editing new exegetical material, he elucidated this important branch of Jewish literature.

Of Geiger's labors in the field of Mediaeval Jewish poetry, there are to be noted his essay on Judah ha-Levi, his monograph on Gabirol, and his collection of selected poems from the writings of Spanish poets, published under the name of *Ziẓim u-Perahim* (Buds and Flowers). In all these works, the author had in mind the lay reader more than the scholarly world. It was his intention to introduce the poetic literature of the Spanish Golden Age to the intellectual Jews of Germany. Their value consists more in the poetic German translation of the numerous poems than in the historical and critical characterization of the poets themselves. The last feature, however, is by no means to be minimized. In his "Judah ha-Levi," he draws a vivid picture of the life, poetic quality, and character of this great Jewish singer, illustrating each period of his life and phase of his poetry by beautifully translated poems. There is much love and genuine appreciation of ha-Levi's spirit and poetic genius in the essays, but there is also noted an unconscious tendency to minimize the nationalistic side of the poet. Instead, much emphasis is placed on the religious phase of his character. This tendency, of course, was due to the writer's own sentiments.

Of greater value is the work on Gabirol published in 1867 in the

latter part of Geiger's life. It contains both a detailed study of the life and poetry of this God-intoxicated bard and a large number of translations of his poems. The *Ziqim u-Parahim* consists of two parts, a Hebrew part containing the selections proper and a German, where not only are the poems translated, but also the character of the poets and the quality of their poetry are discussed and evaluated. The German essay which was also published separately under the title of *Jüdische Dichtungen der spanischen Schule*, presents a survey of the works of the minor poets of that school from the twelfth to the fourteenth century. Of special value are the selections and translations of the specimens of polemic poetry (Vol. II, Sec. 32) which were published in the book for the first time. Geiger's works in this branch of Jewish literature created an interest on the part of wider Jewish circles in the poetic activity of the Spanish Golden Age and was instrumental in calling forth further labors in this field.

The important works of our author in other branches of literature are his collection of essays published in 1840, entitled *Melo Hofnaim* (a Handful, i.e. collection of diverse literary specimens); essays on Jewish apologetic literature entitled *Proben jüdischer Vertheidigung gegen christliche Angriffe im Mittelalter* (Specimens of Jewish Defense against Christian attacks in the Middle Ages); and his biographies of de Modena (Vol. II, Sec. 141) and Maimonides. The first contains a number of Hebrew literary documents of importance, published for the first time, among them a letter containing a brief history of Jewish literature by Joseph Solomon del Medigo and the polemic letter of Profiat Duran (both of these are described in Vol. II, Secs. 145, 149). The value of the book, however, consists in the monograph on the life and works of del Medigo contained in the German part. Geiger had a special attraction for the erratic and colorful personality of del Medigo who was a scientist and a Kabbalist, a free thinker, and a pious Jew at the same time. His biography brought out in a vivid light the life of this wandering sage who was an interesting personality in spite of his waywardness, and also elucidated the period in which he lived and acted. With similar care, he delineated the life and works of the other erratic scholar of exceptional ability, a kindred spirit to del Medigo, that of Leon de Modena. Both biographies contributed to the knowledge of Jewish history in the sixteenth century.

The essays on Jewish apologetics and polemics form another con-

tribution both to Jewish history and to an important branch of literature. The most noted of these essays is the one on the Karaite polemist, Isaac Troki, and his work, *Hisuk Emunah* (Vol. II, Sec. 126). It contains not only an analysis of this important work which was brought to the attention of the Jewish world by Geiger, but also valuable notes dealing with other polemic works.

His essay on Maimonides is an incomplete sketch of the life and works of the sage, yet it created a great stir in the Jewish scholarly circles. This was due to his championing the theory that Maimonides embraced Islam and passed publicly as a Moslem during his residence in Fez. This view was not new. It was expressed previously by historians and scholars, Gentile and Jewish. But Geiger defended it with great skill and went to great lengths in his arguments to substantiate it, even to misinterpreting passages in historical documents. At this time, it is quite clear that he erred in his judgment, and even in his time he was severely criticized by leading Jewish scholars. Still, he found followers, and his view was accepted by Graetz in his history.¹⁶

Much energy and effort was devoted by Geiger to the study of the Bible and the early Halakah and their development, of which the books included in the third class are the result. The leading work of this class is the *Urschrift und Übersetzungen der Bibel in ihrer Abhängigkeit von der inneren Entwicklung des Judentums*. Geiger considered this treatise his magnum opus, and with justice, for it is impressive both in quantity and quality. Even its long name by no means expresses its full contents, as it deals not only with the text of the Bible and its vicissitudes and mutations, with the nature and character of the Greek and Aramaic translations of the Bible, but also with the development of the Halakah up to the end of the Tannaitic period, and many ancillary subjects. Consequently it cannot be summarized, and we may touch only upon some of its high lights. The work is of the highest scholarly quality, yet it cannot be denied that on the whole it is dominated by a certain practical tendency though it is not expressed explicitly. This tendency is the implied justification of the principle advocated by the author in his theological writings that Judaism or, more correctly, the Jewish religious and legal tradition, was constantly developing during the greater part of Jewish history, and continually changing in response to conditions

¹⁶ On the subject of Maimonides' conversion, see Berliner's essay, *Zur Ehrenrettung des Maimonides*, in *Moses ben Maimon*, Vol. II, pp. 103-130.

of life. It ceased to change only in the Mediaeval period, when Jewish life was narrowed down to the life of the law.

That such was the case he undertakes to show from the text of the Bible proper. It is his view that the Masoretic text which we possess is a result of many recastings of numerous readings in all the books, or in other words, the outgrowth of a process which was going on during the entire period of the Second Commonwealth and reached its climax at the end of the second century of the Common Era in the school of Akiba. The original text was much different. Proof for this view he finds in the different readings in the text of the Bible found in the Septuagint, the *Targumim*, and also in the interpretation of verses in older Halakic sources, all of which deviate from the Masoretic version. Unlike Frankel and Luzzatto, who explained the differences found in the translations either as results of the ignorance of the translators, or as errors made by copyists in the case of the Septuagint, or as purposeful renderings in the case of the *Targum Onkelos*, Geiger thinks these differences to have been based on actual readings of the Hebrew Bible which were in themselves corrections introduced by certain people for definite purposes. These readings were again changed by later scholars when conditions changed. Hence the Masoretic text differs from the one underlying the Septuagint or even from those texts used by later translators who retained in their rendering the older readings. These changes, further asserts Geiger, are of great importance, for they reflect the conditions of life during the entire period of the Second Commonwealth and of the inner development of Judaism during that period. The Bible was always the center of Jewish life, and it follows that all political and religious conditions during the life of the Jews in their own land, influenced the formation of its text. With this basic view in mind, the author proceeds on his way of interpreting Jewish life during the period of the Second Commonwealth, its strifes and struggles and their reflection in the Bible or, more correctly, in the text of the Bible. In the first book of the work which deals with the history of the Bible until the Maccabean period, the various phases of Jewish life and their reflection in the literature are delineated. He does not discuss there the sources of the Pentateuch, nor even the fixation of the Canon, but generally assumes that the Hagiographa as well as parts of the prophetic books were produced during the first period of the Second Commonwealth, and consequently they reflect the life of that time. The gist of his view upon Jewish life during the time indicated is as follows:

Before the first exile, during the last days of the Judean monarchy, there rose to power the priestly family which traced its descent from Zadok, high priest in the time of Solomon. They were considered the true priests and guardians of the Temple. On the return from exile, this family at first shared the power with Zerubabel, descendant of David, but they soon placed his children in the background and became the leaders of the people helping Ezra and Nehemiah in the Reformation and inculcating true faith in the hearts of the people. On account of their descent from Zadok, they were called Zadokites, and when later the head of that family was also the high-priest and ruler, also *Zaddikim* (the Just). This family, which in the course of time became very numerous, formed the aristocracy and the ruling party of the land.

At the time of the Reformation of Ezra and Nehemiah, the mass of the people included many proselytes and members of other peoples. Through the influence of these leaders, the men who were loyal to the Torah separated from the masses and formed themselves into groups of guardians of national purity. In time the foreign elements became totally assimilated and the masses became more homogeneous and pious. Yet the distinction between them and the "separated" was not obliterated. There were then three groups: the masses, the national party, and the priestly aristocracy. Though the priestly party was revered and respected, the national party was closer to the people, and its leaders, the scholars, exerted more influence upon them. There was no rift between the priestly and the national parties in the earlier period of their development; both the Zadokites and the scholars of the national party interpreted the law and fostered piety. The rift began when the priests, wanting to find favor in the eyes of the foreign rulers, the Syro-Greeks, began to adopt Hellenism. The people and their leaders rose against them, and the result was the Maccabean victory and the rise to the high-priesthood of another family, the Hasmoneans.

All these political, social, and religious changes, Geiger believes to be reflected in literature, not only in the content of many of the hagiographic or of the parts of prophetic books written during that period, but also in changed texts in older books, including the Pentateuch. He finds the Zadokite party referred to in the Bible under the name of *Zaddikim* and discovers numerous changes introduced by them in order to justify their right to power. On the other hand, many chapters and verses in the Hagiographa and in

other books speak in disparaging terms of their late representatives, the Hellenist priests. Again, Geiger thinks the prohibition of inter-marriage with the Moabites and the Ammonites even when they become proselytes (Deut. XXIII, 4-8) to have been a later insertion on the part of those who opposed such marriages. He also believes that the Book of Ruth was written in defense of such practice, namely, the writer wanted to show that a Moabite woman was the ancestress of the Davidic dynasty. These are only a few of the examples of the numerous changes introduced as a result of the conditions of the time.

The second book entitled the History of the Bible from the Maccabees to the reign of Hadrian is the most important part of the work. In it his theory of the two parties, the Pharisees and the Sadducees, is brought forth, a theory which was novel and ingenious but in many points forced and casuistic. These parties according to Geiger were no other than the aristocratic *Zadokites*, now called *Zedukim*, and the national party, now called *Perushim* (i.e. separated). The *Zadokites* lost the high-priesthood but not the leadership, for even the Maccabean princes were allied with them. Consequently, the strife between these parties was primarily a political one. In view of the interpretation of their origin described above, Geiger was forced to minimize the religious differences between the parties. He categorically rejects the current view that the Sadducees denied the validity of the oral law; he further doubts the assertion of Josephus that they did not believe in reward and punishment after death and in resurrection, and asserts that they merely did not emphasize these beliefs. The Pharisees of the national party did not in fact differ greatly from the Sadducees in fundamentals for there was in the beginning a kind of common Halakah. The differences in minor things arose partly because the Pharisees were more interested in religious matters, while the Sadducees as leaders of the state leaned towards political affairs.

The rift, however, widened when, in the time of Herod, the high-priesthood passed to the Bethusians—the family appointed by Herod. These allied with the *Zedukim* and caused the latter to deviate from the way hitherto followed by the aristocratic party. In general, Geiger represents the Sadducees as an aristocratic conservative party, and the Pharisees as a national popular party and in a degree more liberal.

From such a point of view our author finds it very difficult to

explain many of the legal differences between the parties recorded in Tannaitic literature, and he uses his entire ingenuity to explain them employing casuistic and homiletic devices. Thus to quote a few: He explains the difference between them in regard to the Feast of Weeks, (Shabuot) which according to the Pharisees always falls on the fiftieth day from the first day of Passover—namely, the sixth of Siwan which may fall on any day of the week, while according to the Sadducees it falls always on a Sunday but on any day of the month of Siwan between the sixth and the fourteenth, as due to political reasons. He claims that the change was brought about by the Bethusians, who resented the fact that the Pharisees had wrested the power of calendar fixation from the priests, in order to question the right of the former to regulate the holidays. The difference in the interpretation of the verse in Leviticus XXIII, 15, usually given as the reason for the Sadducean view, was in his opinion, only a device to mask the political intention. Likewise, he explains several controversies between the two sects in laws of purity and impurity on the basis of political differences. On the whole, he relegates many differences to the later period of the Bethusians and not to the Sadducean proper.

With the decline of the state and the subjection of Judea to the Romans, the split between the parties widened still more. The aristocrats inclined towards peace, while the national party became more and more patriotic, and slowly began to gain the upper hand in Jewish life. With the downfall of the state, it became dominant, while the Sadducees disappeared altogether.

It was then that new tendencies in the oral law began to become prominent. The older Halakah of the Pharisees was close to that of the Sadducees, but the younger differed more and more.

All these changes in the inner life were reflected in the text of the Bible. Until the complete victory of the Pharisees, the Bible was used as a means to express opinions, and scholars did not hesitate to change texts to correspond to their views. With the rise of the younger Halakah, the tendency to standardize the text of the Bible became more manifest, and instead of changing the reading, they rather interpreted the verse. Changes, however, were often made in order to eradicate Sadducean views, both religious and legal, introduced by them into the text. Efforts, which were not always successful, were also made to restore earlier readings. After this process of standardization had gone on for some time, it was com-

pleted by Akiba, the leading representative of the new Halakah. It was due to his effort that the new Greek translation of the Bible by Aquila was undertaken, as well as the Aramaic known as *Targum Onkelos*, both of which agree fairly well with the Masoretic text. Changes were also introduced in the text for other reasons besides those mentioned above, for the purpose of purifying the God conception or because of national ideas, or because of antiquated expression. All these changes, however, were made in earlier days. From the time of Akiba on, the text of the Bible was kept in comparative purity except for minor differences due to the invention of vowels and accents, and the different readings of the Babylonian and Palestinian schools.

Geiger finds proof for his views in the references of the older Halakah found in the Mishnah, and especially in the Tannaitic Midrashim on the Pentateuch and also in the Palestinian *Targum*. This older Halakah bases itself many times on readings in verses of the Pentateuch different from those adopted by the later Halakah. Likewise, the Jerusalem *Targum* which was not standardized by the schools of the leaders of the new Halakah contains many vestiges of the older views.

Geiger discusses all these subjects in great detail with many illustrations and citations from the Apocryphal, Targumic, and Talmudic literature. In the course of the presentation of the subject, he discusses also the nature and character of some books of the Apocrypha, the various *Targumim*, and several Tannaitic Midrashim. As a result, we can say that though the theories propounded in the book cannot all be substantiated and many of the suggestions were prejudiced both by the special tendency of the book and by the radical attitude of the author towards tradition, yet its value is great. The exceptional erudition displayed, the keen penetration in historical events and into the meaning of Talmudic passages, and the wide field it covers, opened up new paths for study both in the field of Bible and Talmud. That it aroused violent opposition on the part of conservative scholars goes without saying. Of Rapoport's severe criticism of the work and Luzzatto's attitude towards it we had occasion to speak. (Sec. 74)

As a sequel to his *Urschrift* can be considered Geiger's *Einleitung in die biblische Schriften* (Introduction to the Biblical Books) which consists of a number of lectures delivered to the students of the *Lehranstalt für die Wissenschaft des Judentums* in the years 1871-73

and published posthumously in the *Nachgelassene Schriften*. This work is divided into four parts, the first of which deals with the books in general, their division and their bond of unity. After discussing the number of books contained in the Bible and their traditional division into three categories, namely Torah or the Pentateuch, *Nebiim* or the prophetic books, and the *Ketubim* or the Hagiographa, he asserts that in spite of the variety of the subjects with which the books deal, they are all united by one bond which imparts to them special importance. This is the holiness which the people of Israel attached to them. This holiness, according to our author, is not because of their divine origin, for he does not consider them as such, but arises merely from the relation they bear to Israel. The term *Kitbē ha-Kodesh* is interpreted by him not to mean Holy Scriptures, but the Scriptures of the holy people or group. He endeavors to establish his view by citations from the Bible and Talmud. He also discusses in detail the criterion of holiness applied by the Talmud to the books. In consonance with this view which emphasizes the holiness to consist in the acceptance of these books by the people as a whole rather than in their supposed divine origin, he doubts, contrary to the accepted opinion, whether any act of canonization of the Bible ever took place. Consequently, he passes over in silence the question of the time of the closing of the Canon of the Bible.

The text of the Bible in its various vicissitudes is the subject of the second part. Here the questions of the deviations from the Masoretic texts found in the Talmud are analyzed, and the reasons for such differences given. Then the subjects of the two systems of vocalization, the Babylonian and the Palestinian, are taken up. Geiger repeats here his opinion expressed in the *Urschrift* that from the second century on few changes were introduced in the text and that the text of the Bible in Talmudic times was almost the same as the one before us, except in some minor details. It was different, of course, in the pre-Talmudic times. This question was, as we have seen, discussed at length in the *Urschrift*, and it is omitted here. He devotes himself to technical changes and peculiarities, such as have arisen from the change of the script from the ancient Hebrew to the Assyrian, and purposeful changes in readings on account of antiquated words or undignified expressions. He also endeavors to explain the significance of special marks found in the Bible, such as inverted or dotted letters. In regard to the origin of the system of vocalization, Geiger agrees with Luzzatto that its place was Baby-

lonia, and that it was later transported to Palestine and altered. This view was proved incorrect. A survey of the Samaritan text of the Pentateuch concludes this part.

The third part is devoted to the translations of the Bible, ancient as well as modern. The greater part of it deals with the ancient translations, the Greek, Latin, Syriac, and the Aramaic. The subject is treated at length, and we have before us an elucidating essay on the nature and character of each of the Greek translations from the Septuagint to that of Symmachus, the *Vulgate* of Jerome, the Syrian *Peshitta*, and the various *Targumim*. To complete the survey, he includes the translations made at various times of the Samaritan Pentateuch into Greek, Aramaic and Arabic.

The fourth part which occupies half of the book is devoted to the development of the Biblical books and their redaction. Here Geiger parts company with Jewish tradition and expresses an extreme radical view of Biblical criticism. Following many of the critics of his day, he assumes that some of the prophetic books form the nucleus of the Bible and that the Pentateuch was a later work compounded from various sources and joined into one by a redactor. The entire Jewish history as given in the Pentateuch is only a projection of the theories propounded by later men into earlier times. He does believe in a kind of exodus from Egypt, but in an entirely different manner than the one presented in the Bible, limiting it only to several tribes of the *Benē Joseph* group. Similarly, he clings to the idea of revelation, but as we will see, in a rather shadowy manner. On the whole, there is little originality in these views and theories, and with the exception of some scattered passages displaying Jewish erudition, it might have been written by any Gentile Biblical scholar. It is the first three sections which exerted some influence on the further progress of Jewish learning and not the fourth. A number of Hebrew essays on Talmudic subjects, such as the older and the younger Halakah, on legal controversies between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and on the Tannaitic Midrash to Leviticus complete Geiger's works in the fields of Bible and Talmud.

To the fourth class of Geiger's works, dealing with historical and theological subjects belong the following books: *Das Judenthum und seine Geschichte*, in two parts, published in 1865; *Einleitung in das Studium der jüdischen Theologie*; and the *Allgemeine Einleitung in die Wissenschaft des Judenthums*, both published posthumously in the second volume of the *Nachgelassene Schriften*. All three works

consist of lectures delivered at various times. The first comprises twenty-four lectures delivered in the winter of 1863-64 in Frankfort on the Main; the content of the second was presented to theological students in Breslau in the year 1849; and that of the third was read before the students in the *Hochschule* in the years 1872-73.

The most important of these three is the treatise "Judaism and its History." It is both a historical and theological work, for though it surveys and analyzes the important moments and periods of Jewish history, its purpose is not so much to furnish historical information as to illustrate the author's views of Judaism and its course of development.

As such it is, of course, permeated and dominated by the tendency to prove the veracity of the views which Geiger pronounced and vigorously defended in his role as a champion of the Reform movement, an outline of which was given above. In this book, however, his views are more coherent and are presented in the form of a unified system, though far from a complete and thorough one. Here Geiger appears to us in the role of a radical reformer and advocates a complete change in the conception of Judaism and its beliefs totally different from those held by the majority of the Jews or the traditional ones. At times, he uses old theological terms but with an entirely different content.

He begins the first part with a kind of an apology for religion in general. The sixties of the last century was the time when science began to press its claim for dominance in the world of thought, when the theory of evolution just launched greatly impressed the learned and undermined religious beliefs in a God who both created the world and supervises it. Our author found it, therefore, necessary to prove that religion, in spite of the claims of science, still has a place in the world. He was the first among the Jews to take account of the Darwinian theory of evolution and its effects on religion. Even, says he, if we grant the hypothesis that species originated one from the other, yet the fact that the process is not continued, and that one species is not transformed into another, proves to us that the world is not ruled by a blind force but by one which orders nature according to will and reason. From such reasoning, it is not difficult for him to posit the existence of a God, and rejecting the hypothesis of the kinship of man with certain kinds of apes on account of the special spirit which distinguishes him from all other animals, he comes to the conclusion that religion plays and will always

play an important role in man's life. But what is religion? To this query our author answers that it is the aspiration of the spirit of man for the ideal, an attachment to the whole, and a striving toward the Infinite or God.

He then turns to Judaism and endeavors to explain its origin and fundamental nature. Religion is the need of all men, and all peoples developed their own religions; but the Jewish people, he claims, have always had a special genius for religion. He tries to explain this phenomenon by a comparison between talent and genius. The man of talent may accomplish great things but always with the help of material given to him and always in a limited way. Genius, on the other hand, creates new things, and sees the whole by intuition. Likewise, the Jewish people with its special intuition for religion, created a monotheism in its complete form. This intuition he calls revelation, thus saving the old term for the system. Revelation manifested itself at first in the prophets but was later possessed by the entire people though in an incomplete form. The religion of the Jews, or Judaism, though conceived and revealed by and within a particular nation, is yet universal in character, and in fact proved itself a force outliving its peculiar nationality. The contradiction between the emphasis upon the universality of Judaism and the fact of its birth and development in and by a particular nation troubled Geiger much, and he constantly attempts to reconcile the facts. But before dwelling upon this question he is forced to apologize for other features of Judaism which militate against the universality and humanity with which it is endowed, namely the institutions of slavery, priesthood, and sacrifices. He endeavors to show that both slavery and sacrifices were merely concessions to conditions of the time, and that "Priesthood was only tolerated in Judaism and that a war against it runs through the whole history."¹⁷ This idea is a fundamental element in Geiger's conception of Jewish history. In the same way he attempts to explain Jewish nationalism merely as a necessary means for introducing Judaism into the world. He finds support for his view in the fact that the Jews were not able to develop a perfect political unity, for they had a higher mission.

Concluding his survey of the rise and birth of Judaism, its nature and character with a brief sketch of events up to the first exile, he comes to the period of its real development or history, that of the Second Commonwealth. This period is characterized by Geiger as

¹⁷ *Judenthum und seine Geschichte*. Eng. Trans. p. 67.

one of tradition. But tradition to him has a peculiar connotation, just as revelation. It is not to be taken in the usual meaning but "as the developing power which continues in Judaism as an invisible creative agent, as something that never attains its full expression but ever continues to work, transform, and create."¹⁸ Tradition conceived as such is a principle consonant with Geiger's views on the necessity of reform in Judaism, but the application of such a conception to the philosophy of the history of Judaism during that period is a bit forced. In the subsequent lectures he presents to us his view of the meaning of the events which transpired in Judaism and Jewry during the Second Commonwealth. It is the same view which was given in the *Urschrift*. The entire history consists in a struggle between the priestly and the democratic parties, and hence the controversy between the Pharisees and Sadducees. From this view, all events are judged. The tendency in these chapters is quite evident. The essence of Judaism consists, of course, in universal and ethical elements; the legal and national parts were only means for its preservice and arose only through peculiar conditions. He therefore speaks with enthusiasm of Alexandrian Jewry which made Egypt its home and became saturated with the Greek spirit, thus demonstrating the ability of the Jews to acclimatize themselves. It was, of course, different in Palestine; there, Judaism resisted Hellenism and developed legalism. But this legalism was, as stated, only a result of political strife and was really due to the efforts of the Sadducees to maintain the prestige of the priesthood and the Temple worship. The fact that the Pharisees, their opponents, were as legally-minded and as zealous for the law as the former, does not matter. They represented the popular party, fought for democracy, enunciated noble thoughts on humanity, and displayed liberalism in adjusting the law to life, as evidenced in the reforms introduced by Hillel. Geiger overlooks the results of the activity of these schools of the Pharisees which led to a fully developed legal life, as he expects to explain them later.

At this point he is met by an important phenomenon, the rise of Christianity. He explains its origin partly through the ideas of the Essenes who advocated an other-worldly view of life and partly through the excessive nationalism of the zealots who refused subjection to any king but God. Geiger is extremely opposed to the spirit of Christianity. He sees in it a denial of progress.

¹⁸ Ibid., p. 86.

According to it, all is already given, the Messiah had already come, and the ideal is already realized. Again, it does not tolerate other ideas beside itself as it considers itself complete. Development is excluded and progress barred. Besides, it lays too much emphasis on one individual and inoculates humanity with original sin. Judaism is free from all these faults, and in addition it looks toward an ideal future with humanity as the Messiah.

Turning back to the course of Judaism, our author discusses the fall of the Jewish state but does not mourn over it. It was not the mission of Judaism to establish a nation; its nationality was but a temporal hull, a necessary means for its development, but when Judaism reached a stage of maturity, "the national form might be broken."¹⁹

With such observations, he opens his second part, dealing with Judaism in exile. He sees in the development of the legal activity from the second century on only another means of preserving Judaism in its essence, a necessary means due to the conditions of the time. He views with satisfaction the establishment of centers outside of Palestine as a healthy expression of the power of Judaism to acclimatize itself in all lands. He sees in Babylonian Judaism a superiority over that of Palestinian, attributing to it, quite erroneously, the fixation of the calendar by calculation, and thus introducing the science of mathematics in religious life. As another sign of progress, he considers the statement of the Amora Samuel, *Dina de-Malkuta Dina* (The law of the state is law) to which he gives a wider connotation than it really contains.

Coming down to the Middle Ages, we find his particular tendency of interpreting events in the light of his views less evident. In general, he regards the whole of the Middle Ages as a period of sterile legalism—he calls it by this name in his *Allgemeine Einleitung*—but he finds light spots in that period too, such as the participation of the Jews in the culture of the Arabic world, and in their philosophic, scientific and poetic activity during the Golden Age.

Very peculiar, though interesting, is his view of the Karaites. He considers them actual descendants of the Sadducees which party he believes to have continued in existence through the ages. With great ingenuity, he tries to reconcile the difference between the teachings of both parties which are apparently irreconcilable. Such views were

¹⁹ Ibid., p. 161.

expressed by other scholars, but not in as extreme a form as by Geiger.

With much love he draws the picture of the great men of the Middle Ages, especially Gabirol, ha-Levi, Ibn Ezra, and Maimonides. He glosses over ha-Levi's strong nationalism and emphasizes his religious piety. Nor is Maimonides fully satisfactory to him. His explanation of the precepts are not sufficient, nor is his attempt to rationalize them worthy. Likewise, his Code which considers legal observance obligatory and practical religion a complete thing is hardly to the taste of Geiger. Yet he speaks of the man with warmth and deep reverence. The scholar overcame the reformer.

What is the result of all these surveys and discussions? It is not explained clearly but hinted at in several remarks. Thus at the end of the first part he asks the question: "How are we prepared for the new age?" In answer, he says that the new Hillel who will arise will say: "Do not continually keep your eyes on the past—Jerusalem is a tomb. You must draw from the living present and labor in it."²⁰ In other words, Judaism must live, for it has a mission, but it must change its form of particularistic separateness and move along with mankind on its march of progress.

That there was error and looseness of judgment both in his views on the development of Judaism, its future destiny, as well as in his belief in the defunct role of Jerusalem is now evident to all. Later historical research invalidated the former; the present events in Palestine and in the diaspora belie the others. But we must not deny him sincerity, zeal on behalf of and love for Judaism in the way he understood it.

The same ideas expressed in "Judaism and its History" are also expressed in the other works, especially in the *Allgemeine Einleitung in die Wissenschaft des Judenthums*, but in a more erudite form. Besides all these works, Geiger published many articles on various subjects in his *Zeitschrift*. In general, it can be said, that in spite of his tendencies and special motives he had in developing certain views, he enriched all fields of Jewish learning by his erudition, critical penetration, and brilliancy of suggestion and hypothesis. There is much in his works which was refuted and forgotten, but also much of permanent and durable character.

79. MORITZ STEINSCHNEIDER

A somewhat younger contemporary of all these peers of learning

²⁰ Ibid., p. 126.

whose work we have surveyed, but none the less one of the most important builders of "Jewish Science," was Moritz Steinschneider (1816-1907). Just as his life stretched almost through the entire nineteenth century and even reached over to the twentieth, so are his contributions interwoven and inherently connected with the entire literary activity in all fields and branches during the larger part of that period and even of several decades beyond its limits. He was the most universal and all-embracing Jewish scholar of the last century. His erudition was so extensive that it included not only all phases of the wide Jewish literature in all its ramifications and manifestations, but also all other fields of knowledge and science wherein any relation to Judaism and its literature could be discovered. Equally large and wide was his range of interests. All that the Jewish genius produced in the twenty-five hundred years of its activity was his concern, and to the exploration of every part of that activity he devoted almost three quarters of a century. Having been endowed with remarkable abilities, with a special gift for the mastery of languages, and with a rare capacity for work, he succeeded in producing during his life-time so great an amount of books, treatises, and long articles, that were they all collected they would form a full-sized library by themselves.

His productivity, however, is not distinguished by mere quantity but also by its highly scientific quality. Steinschneider was the most objective Jewish scholar of his time. Unlike other Jewish scholars, he was not swayed by the movements in Jewish life; the clash of opinions and the turmoil of warring factions during the period affected him little. His interests were limited to the acquisition of knowledge, its dissemination, and the search for truth in historical and literary investigations. His life-story, therefore, is a very simple one and can be summarized in a few lines.

He was born in Prossnitz in Moravia. His father who was a Jewish scholar instructed him in Hebrew and Jewish lore while he received his secular training at the public school. At the age of sixteen, he went to Nikolsburg to perfect himself in the study of the Talmud under the famous Rabbi Naḥum Trebitsch, and from there he proceeded to Prague, where he continued both his Jewish and secular studies. In 1830 he came to Vienna where he devoted himself to the study of Oriental languages, which studies he continued at Leipzig under the great Arabist, Fleischer. In the latter city he also began his literary work by the translation of the Koran into He-

brew and by cooperating with Franz Delitzsch in the edition of the philosophic book, *Ez Hayyim*, by the Karaite, Aaron ben Elijah (Vol. II, Sec. 123). At that time he still intended to enter the Rabbinate, but he soon abandoned the idea and came to Berlin in 1839 and engaged in literary work. For a time he supported himself by acting as reporter and correspondent for several German newspapers. In 1845 he wrote for the encyclopaedia of Ersch and Gruber an article of several hundred pages on Jewish literature, which was the first attempt to give a complete though a succinct survey of the entire Jewish literature. This article, together with several of his other works, made him famous among scholars, and in 1848 he received a commission from the Bodleian library in Oxford to prepare a catalogue for its collection of Hebrew books. He was engaged in this work for thirteen years and the result was the well-known Bodleian Catalogue, the standard work of its kind. In 1859 he was appointed lecturer at the *Veitel-Heine Ephraimische Lehranstalt*. From 1869 to 1890, he acted as director of the girls' school of the Jewish community and also held the position of assistant librarian at the royal library in Berlin. After that year he devoted himself exclusively to literary work until the day of his death.

Against the background of the simplicity of his life, the versatility and many-sidedness of his work stands out in marked contrast. It reflects the multiple activity in the various fields of Jewish learning for a long period with the result that there was hardly a Jewish scholar whom Steinschneider did not put under obligation. For that matter, even today, little can be accomplished in any branch of Jewish literature without consulting the sources of information accumulated by our savant.

Steinschneider began his literary activity by placing before himself an exceptionally high ideal, an almost unattainable goal. It was his intention to determine and describe the participation of the Jews during the entire Mediaeval period in the cultural activity of the nations among whom they dwelt, and moreover, to gauge the extent of their influence upon the progress of science and life.

This grand task imposed upon our scholar a double line of investigation, first to survey the contents of the entire Jewish literature, including that of the various sects, and secondly to scan the literature of the nations with whom the Jews came in contact and determine the mutual relations between the Jews and the world at large. The

work involved in the pursuit of such investigation can hardly be described. Thousands of books had to be read, whole libraries catalogued and described, fields of ancillary sciences studied, and literatures in many languages perused.

The result of the indefatigable labors of our savant during his long life were embodied in many treatises and hundreds of articles and essays which can be divided into the following classes: (a) works on the history of Jewish literature; (b) descriptive catalogues of the great collections of Hebrew books and manuscripts in the world; (c) books dealing with the development of special branches of Jewish literature; (d) treatises on ancillary subjects touching upon the fields of science or culture of other nations which have an indirect bearing upon Jewish intellectual and literary activity.

To the first class belong the *Jüdische Literatur* (Jewish Literature) and the *Einleitung in die jüdische Literatur des Mittelalter* (An Introduction to the Jewish Literature of the Middle Ages). The first was published in 1850 as an article in the large encyclopaedia of Ersch and Gruber. It was later translated into English and published with additions in 1857. Still later it was also translated into Hebrew by the late Dr. Henry Malter, a disciple of Steinschneider. It is a treatise of over four hundred pages, divided into four books, and constitutes the first history of the entire post-Biblical literature. On account of the extent of the field and the enormity of the mass of literature it covers, it is written in a succinct and concise manner, suited more to the taste of the student than that of the average reader. Still, it is complete, for hardly a book or an author of importance is omitted.

Steinschneider divides the entire post-Biblical literature into four periods: The first extends from Ezra (c. 458 B. C. E.) to the rise of European Jewish centers, and the contact with Arabic culture (c. 850 B. C. E.); the second, from the ninth century to the exile from Spain (1492); the third, from that date to the time of Mendelssohn (1750); and the fourth from that time on. He devotes his first book to the first period, the second and third to the second which he considers with justice one of development and expansion, and the fourth book to the third period which, in his opinion, was a period of decline. The fourth period, being recent, was omitted by him altogether. Within these divisions, he reviews, with exceptional detail, every branch of Jewish literature possible, giving first in a brief

manner the general characteristics and then noting every worth while work in that branch. The special merit of the work at the time of its appearance was that it brought to the attention of the world, for the first time, the many-sidedness and the richness of Jewish literature. Some of its branches, such as those dealing with science, geography, polemics, and others, were hardly known to the learned world outside of Jewish circles. It was the merit of Steinschneider to reveal to all who were interested in the subject the wealth of Jewish literature in all its phases, and thus prove the great contribution of the Jews to the culture and progress of both the East and the West. Of course, the narrative is rather dry and few judgments are pronounced on the books mentioned. Yet the very completeness of the work and the revelation of unknown phases of literary and scientific productivity aroused the interest of the learned. In fact, the English translation of the work was due to the interest taken by Lord William Spottiswood, a historian of mathematics, in the chapters dealing with Jewish works on mathematics and science.

The "Introduction to Jewish Literature of the Middle Ages," one of the late works of Steinschneider, was first published in the volumes of the Jewish Quarterly Review during the years 1903-1906 and later issued separately. In this book he first deals with details and with minute data, and then turns to the delineation of the general principles and conditions underlying the production of Jewish Mediaeval literature during the centuries. The subject is dealt with under the following heads: (a) nationality, (b) geographic influence, (c) religious development, (d) political conditions, (e) culture, (f) language, and (g) encyclopaedic development of the branches of literature.

Regarding the first, he says, that the Jews themselves and all others considered, during the Mediaeval times, the Jewish community a nation. Taking in consideration, he continues, that nationality consists of the following elements: unity of descent, common language, the possession of a fatherland, and a set of laws, we may conclude that the Jews were really a nation in those times. They possessed unity of descent and a common set of laws. Hebrew literature took the place of the spoken language, while the Messianic hope served as an ideal substitute for the possession of a land. He recognizes, however, that due to the dispersion, Jewish life was not a unity but represented a kind of dual character, since it moved in two worlds, the inner national and the external.

This fact, of course, is one of the conditions which determine the character of Jewish literature. The geographic influence, namely the dispersion of the Jews in different lands is another important factor. Here the author describes the characteristics of the types of Jewish literature produced in various countries.

Religious development, says Steinschneider, is the very goal of Jewish history. This should not surprise us, for according to him, religion was also the essence of Jewish nationalism during the Middle Ages. He, however, expounds the meaning of religious development in a broad way. We must not, says he, take Jewish history as the history of Judaism in a narrow sense. Judaism, as such, is a religion pure and simple, and has no extensive history, for its fundamental principles are few and clear, and besides were not developed; they were conceived intuitively. It is, therefore, not religion pure and simple which is the object of Jewish history, but the manifestations of religion, namely law, morality, cultural relation to the world, and the literature which reflects these phenomena. These things have a history. Of interest to history is also the struggle of knowledge or reason against authority. In Judaism, the struggle found expression in many literary productions, since its center formed the authoritative Scriptures.

The extent and influence of these manifestations of religion are discussed by the author under the head of culture. The history of culture is to Steinschneider the real purpose of history, for culture is the activity of the spirit and its realization. Its contents is the actualization in life of the three great human ideas, the good, the beautiful, and the true. Under the good are included law and right, political and social institutions, family life, moral law and custom. Here the author surveys the place these subjects occupied in Jewish life and their reflection in literature. Under the concept of truth, he discusses the expression of the desire for knowledge of the Jews of the Middle Ages, the history of the cultivation of the sciences, of learning, and the struggle of reason with authority, all of which found their reflection in literature. Even the place of the beautiful or art in Jewish literature, limited as it was, is not passed over by our author, and its expression is noted.

Under the head of language, we have a survey of Jewish literature in other languages besides the Hebrew, from the Aramaic to the Judaeo-German as well as in all important Eastern and Western languages. Under the last heading he gives the main characteristics

of the various branches of literature and delineates the lines of their development.

This introduction, though permeated by a rationalistic spirit which often fails to see the inner workings of past Jewish life, is yet very elucidating and presents not only a bird's eye view of the sum total of the productivity of the Jewish genius during a long period of the history of the people, but also gives a glimpse into the nature of the factors which determined the ways and modes of development of that great literature.

To the second class of works belong the famous series of catalogues, consisting of the Catalogue of Hebrew Books found in the Bodleian Library at Oxford, published in the years 1852-60; the Catalogue of Hebrew Manuscripts in the collection of the Academy at Leyden, Holland, published in 1858; of the Manuscripts in the State Library at Munich, 1875; of the Hebrew Manuscripts in the library at Hamburg, 1878; and of the Royal Library at Berlin in two parts. It is these works which gave Steinschneider the name of the Jewish bibliographer par excellence and through which he made all Jewish scholars dependent upon him for information. When we contemplate this row of bulky tomes, we often wonder how one man could have accomplished such enormous tasks in a single life-time even if that life was exceptionally long. The mere quantity of the work arouses our admiration. In order to give the reader a conception of the amount of energy expended by our author in the compilation of this series of works, it will suffice to say that the Bodleian Catalogue alone contains close to four thousand large-sized columns, of which thirty-one hundred are occupied by the body of the book and the rest by the introduction, indices, charts, and appendices.

However, it is not the quantity of the book which really amazes us, but the quality. It is not a catalogue or a list of books in the ordinary sense of the word, but an epitome of the entire Jewish literature in its numerous phases and branches, and, in addition, an encyclopedia of information on all matters concerning the lives and activities of thousands of Jewish men of letters who labored in the field of Jewish culture during the ages. As Jewish history is so closely connected with the literature of the people, the Catalogue also sheds light upon innumerable facts in the history of our people, and thus enlarges our knowledge of it. The very plan of the book shows its comprehensiveness and value. It is as follows: There is an introduction of several hundred pages which, besides giving a

general description of the work, discusses the subject of names of authors, especially the various cognomens used by them, the problems connected with the determination of the dates of books, when they were written and composed, and the bibliographical sources of Jewish literature. Under the last heading, a survey is given of all the treatises written both by Jews and Gentiles up to his time on the subject of Jewish books and their authors. The body of the Catalogue itself is divided into three large sections. In the first, all anonymous books are described under the divisions of Bible, Talmud, liturgy, poetry, and miscellaneous. Thus 4162 books and treatises are described in detail, giving a résumé of their contents, dates of publication, and all other facts. In the second section, the works of 762 authors are similarly described, sometimes giving as many as twenty or thirty titles by one author. The number of books dealt with in this section runs into the thousands. The third section deals with the printers and editors of books in which there are enumerated close to a thousand works, known by the name of their editors or publishers more than by that of their authors. We indirectly have before us also a history of the Jewish printing-presses, their owners, and the various books printed by them.

In order that we may be able to appreciate the completeness of the work of Steinschneider we will describe briefly the article, *Maimonides*, in the Catalogue. The article is seventy-nine columns long which would make a fair-sized monograph if published separately, and covers practically every item of interest both about the man and his works. It deals first with his name and the titles by which he is referred to in Jewish and Arabic literatures, then the story of his life is told, the sources for each fact quoted, and the controversial incidents in his life, such as the question of Maimonides' conversion, are cleared up. A list of his works in chronological order is given next. Finally each of his works is described in full detail, its manuscripts, editions, translations and paraphrases. All that issued from the pen of this master is discussed at length, without the omission of a single Responsum. In addition, a special section is devoted to his spurious works, namely to works which were at one time or another attributed to Maimonides but are not his. Each judgment in such controversial matters is supported by facts and proofs. Similar articles which occupy many columns and are really monographs are given on Saadia Gaon, Solomon Ibn Gabirol, Judah ha-Levi, Rashi, and others. The Catalogue, written in Latin and in most

concise style, is not accessible to the layman but to the scholar. It represents a veritable mine of information on all subjects pertaining to Jewish literature in the widest sense of that term.

The same qualities, and to even a greater degree, are displayed in the other catalogues. These catalogues are on a smaller scale and the fields they cover are more limited, but on the other hand, they are more detailed. The Leyden Catalogue which consists of 428 pages, besides a long introduction, records only about one hundred manuscripts. Each treatise is fully described, as for instance, the description of one codex, which consists of three books, extends over twenty-seven pages. In these articles, the contents of the books are summarized, the identity of the author is determined, the names of the copyists as well as those of the successive possessors are given, and their identity traced. As a rule, the method employed by the author is noted and delineated, and frequently the names of the principal scholars quoted by the author are also recorded. If the treatise offers passages of special interest, these are also excerpted. Thus the Catalogue offers really a multitude of facts and items of information of great literary value. The other catalogues of manuscripts follow the same method of description. The Bodleian and the Leyden Catalogues are written in Latin, but the others in German.

The third class comprises a long series of works, each of which is a distinct contribution to a special branch of Jewish literature. As can be seen from the titles, there is hardly a phase of the extensive mass of the literary productions of the Jews which was not systematized, classified, and analyzed by our savant. The series consists of eleven bulky volumes, covering the following subjects: (1) *Die hebräischen Übersetzungen des Mittelalters* (The Translations into Hebrew during the Middle Ages); (2) *Bibliographisches Handbuch für Sprachkunde* (Bibliographical Handbook for Science of Language); (3) *Arabische Literatur der Juden* (Arabic Literature of the Jews; namely works by Jews written in the Arabic language); (4) *Polemische und apologetische Literatur der Juden* (Polemic and Apologetic Literature of the Jews); (5) *Geschichts-Literatur der Juden* (Historical Literature of the Jews); (6) Introduction to the Arabic Literature of the Jews, published originally in the Jewish Quarterly Review, Vols. IX-XIII; (7) *Polemische und apologetische Literatur in arabischer Sprache zwischen Muslimen, Christen und Juden* (Polemic and Apologetic Literature in Arabic between Mos-

lems, Christians and Jews); (8) *Jüdisch-deutsche Literatur* (Judaeo-German Literature); (9) *Jüdische Schriften zur Geographie Palästinas* (Jewish Books on the Geography of Palestine); (10) *Purim und Parodie*; (11) *Mathematik bei den Juden* (Mathematics among the Jews). It is impossible to summarize these books and present even a part of their content, for that would necessitate the quotation of long excerpts from the works themselves. We can only say that each of these works is a complete and comprehensive treatise on the subject it deals with. The erudition of Steinschneider was so thorough that he hardly omitted a work or a passage which had any bearing on the subject in hand.

In this series, our author realized a great part of the task he set before himself in his youth, namely to present before the world the contribution of the Jews during the Middle Ages to the culture and learning of the nations among whom they dwelt. Much of this contribution consisted in the transmission by them of the science and philosophy from the East to the West. This useful work which was going on for centuries is delineated for us in *Die hebräischen Übersetzungen des Mittelalters*, a book of eleven hundred long pages printed in small type. In this work, the entire mass of translations into Hebrew of hundreds of books on all subjects from the Greek, Latin, Arabic, and other languages is described, classified, and presented in all details. We are told very succinctly indeed of the principal contents, of the original authors, and of the translators and their activity. Each book is traced in its various transmigrations, for many a treatise went through many transformations. It was originally written in Greek, then translated into Syriac, thence into Arabic, from which it was rendered into Hebrew, and ultimately turned into Latin. Other books were translated both into Arabic and into Hebrew several times, and similarly, they were rendered into Latin more than once. In such cases, it was necessary to compare the versions and determine which particular one was used by the Hebrew or by the Latin translator. Some of the original works were lost, and their existence and contents could only be gauged by the quotations found in other works. Such and many other problems did our author face before he attempted to present to us a picture of that particular activity of the Jews in which they played the role of culture bearers between the Greeks, the Arabs, and the nations of Europe. The field covered by this work is so extensive that it embraces not only the entire philosophic and scientific litera-

ture of the Jews, but also the literature of these branches in Greek, Arabic, and Latin. Steinschneider tells us in his preface to the *Übersetzungen* that he spent more than fifty years in the gathering of material for this work, a fact which enables us to grasp its comprehensiveness and magnitude.

Another part of the task of Steinschneider was realized in his treatise, *Mathematics Among the Jews*. In this work, he determines the contribution of the Jews to the science of mathematics both as original workers in the field and as translators of works on the subject and transmitters of this branch of learning.

In the book on Judaeo-German Literature he was almost the first of the Jewish scholars to trace the history of a literature in a language which became the mother tongue of a large part of Jewry and which played such an important role in the life of great masses of Jews for centuries. In *Purim und Parodie*, the lighter vein of Jewish literature is presented to us. Jewish life in the ghetto was, on the whole, stern and serious, but was mitigated occasionally by merriment and hilarity. This happened usually on Purim, which was one of the joyful days in the ghetto. This outburst of mirth in Jewish life created a literature of its own consisting of puns, quips, parodies, and dramas, primarily in Hebrew but also in the vernaculars, chief of which was the Judaeo-German or the Yiddish. It is these hilarious and humorous works which are surveyed in this treatise, and thus another corner of Mediaeval Jewish life is revealed to us by the history of Jewish letters. The series continues to unravel before the student the treasures of Jewish lore in the different departments indicated by the titles.

To the fourth class of Steinschneider's work belong his treatises (1) on Sabbatai Donolo's work on medicine, a book of over two hundred pages which was originally published in Virchow's *Archiv für pathologische Anatomie und Physiologie*, a contribution to the history of medicine in Italy in the tenth century; (2) *Alfarabi*, where he gives an account of the system of philosophy of this great Arabic thinker, his works, and influence on Jewish and European thought; (3) *Schach bei den Juden*, where he traces the history of that famous game among the Jews; and finally, (4) *Die arabischen Übersetzungen aus dem Griechischen* (The Arabic Translations from the Greek). This work sheds light upon the culture of the Arabs during their Golden Age and the share of this enlightened people in the progress of learning in Mediaeval Europe. Of course, the

Jews are not neglected, their participation in that activity as co-workers of their Moslem savants is fully noted. In fact, the interest of our scholar in all these ancillary studies lay primarily in pointing out the Jewish strand in the great web of culture and learning.

In addition to all these great works, Steinschneider edited a number of Hebrew works from manuscripts with notes and introductions and wrote about fourteen hundred articles in German, Hebrew, French, Latin, Italian, and English, in encyclopaedias and various magazines and learned journals. The articles deal mostly with Jewish subjects, especially with biographies of great men, and some, such as the one on Ibn Ezra, Joseph Ibn Aknin, and others occupy a hundred pages each. A number of these biographical studies were collected in a volume which was supposed to have formed the first of his collected works, but unfortunately remained the only one. The literary energy of this remarkable man was so inexhaustible that he found time in the midst of indefatigable labors to write several text books for the instruction of Hebrew to Jewish children. These are *Reshit ha-Limmud*, an elementary book for the teaching of Hebrew; *Mashal u-Melizah*, a collection of fables and stories in Hebrew; and the *Imrē Binah*, a compilation of proverbs and moral sayings. These books compare quite favorably with the modern Hebrew school books, both in the method of their arrangement and in their Hebrew style.

The long series of works in all branches of Jewish literature, Jewish history and culture, and the fertility of his intellectual activity and its many-sidedness fully substantiate Moritz Steinschneider's claim to the title of Nestor of Jewish Literature and learning.

80. HEINRICH GRAETZ

The last of the great scholars of the nineteenth century whom we denominated the builders of "Jewish Science" was the historian, Zebi Hirsch or Heinrich Graetz (1817-1891). I said the last, not because he was the youngest of the group of brilliant scholars and writers whose literary activities we have surveyed in these pages, as he was in fact their contemporary; nor did he survive all of them, for that distinction, as we have seen, belongs to Steinschneider. This title is bestowed upon him on account of the fact that his literary contribution represents the sum and acme of the labors in the various fields of Jewish learning undertaken by these scholars during an entire generation. It was he who brought to fruition the results of all these labors in the different departments of Jewish knowledge

by gathering them together and presenting them as a complete whole in the twelve volumes of his *History of the Jews*, the first to deserve that name. It was he who collected all the data brought to light by his predecessors and contemporaries, classified, systematized, and arranged them in successive order and logical coherence, and told not only to scholars and students but to the large number of intelligent men and women the long story of a people, scattered throughout the world, in all its phases, changes, and vicissitudes. He was the builder par excellence of the edifice of Jewish history.

Graetz, however, was even more than that. His contribution consisted not only in classifying, systematizing, and welding thousands of data into a single whole, but also in producing a considerable part of the very material out of which his edifice was constructed. Like the Jews of Egypt, he was often forced not only to make the bricks and then place them in rows, but even to gather the straw for the making of the bricks themselves. With all the work done by the great scholars of the generation, much material was still wanted for the construction of a complete and all-embracing Jewish history. Whole periods were still left untouched by the scholar and investigator, and many were the gaps to be filled even in the epochs that were already described by others. Again, even the material at hand was to be tested anew in the light of criticism, sifted, and selected, until the facts could be incorporated in a history for the people at large and given as true historical events. Graetz had undertaken this great task with all the seriousness, learning, and energy necessary for such a stupendous work. He surveyed the entire field of Jewish literary and historical sources, and gathered facts and data from the remotest corners, hewed stones from distant quarries, chipped and shaped them, and made them ready to be placed in the edifice. He further examined the material of others, altered it both in form and content so that it fitted his own, and thus slowly, during a period of twenty years produced his *History*. Through his work he performed a service not only to those Jews who wanted to know the past of their people, but also to the scholars themselves, inasmuch as he translated and conveyed the results of their labors to large masses of Jews in a language and form which they could both comprehend and appreciate. Thus he, the last of a group of great scholars, imparted to the intellectual activity of a generation of savants that touch of life and vividness which converted the dry bones of "Jewish Science" into life-bearing forces and

centers of energy, the effects of which became evident in the following epoch of Jewish history.

The life of Graetz, though less interesting than his work, yet possesses a certain attraction, for it reflects the continuous struggle of a dominant will for expression which overcame many obstacles until it ultimately reached its goal. Furthermore, it is through it that we can explain some of the contradictions and the inconsistencies that meet us in his monumental History.

Heinrich Graetz was born in the small town of Xions in the province of Posen, Prussian Poland. His father Jacob was the owner of a small butcher shop from which he derived a scanty living for his family. Yet like all pious Jews at the time he spared neither money nor effort in order to rear his son as a learned man in Israel, and sent him, at the age of fourteen, to the Yeshibah at Wollstein. There Graetz, under the direction of Rabbi Samuel Zanwel Munk, who was also the head of the academy, delved into the mysteries of the Talmud, and in the course of four and a half years became a master of its lore. There he was also introduced to secular studies, most likely by Rabbi Munk himself, who also passed as a liberal and was conversant with the German language and literature. Young Graetz threw himself with avidity into these studies, read without any particular selection numerous books both in German and French, and within a short time mastered the two languages.

His indiscriminate reading, however, brought some confusion in the mind of the pious youth. He began to doubt some of the beliefs which he was wont to hold as sacred and true. At that time a copy of Samson Raphael Hirsch's book, "The Nineteen Letters of Ben Uziel" (Sec. 73) fell into his hands. The book made a great impression upon him, and for the time being restored his piety and influenced him in the choice of a career in life. He decided to become a rabbi, but in the manner of the day with a university education. For this purpose he prepared to go to Prague, at the time a center of theological studies, and enter the university there. In 1836 he returned to Zerkow whither his parents removed and told his father of his decision. The latter gave his consent and provided his son with letters of recommendation and with some money, and the youth left for his destination. Partly on foot and partly riding, the future historian made his journey to the Austrian border, but there his way was barred. The sum of ten florin (ca. five

dollars) stood between him and the promised land. Graetz did not possess the required sum which every one entering the empire of the Hapsburgs on foot had to present. In great mortification, he returned to Zerkow.

For a time he immersed himself in study, but later he turned to Samson Raphael Hirsch whom he considered the ideal Jewish rabbi, told him of his plight and asked to be enrolled among his disciples. Hirsch in reply invited him to come and study under him and even undertook to support him during his stay at Oldenburg where Hirsch was rabbi at the time. Graetz accepted the invitation with joy, and in the spring of the year 1837 made his journey via Berlin and Leipzig to that city. In order to relieve the tediousness of slow travel by stage, he began to study Greek. Hirsch made a great impression upon the new student, and a relation of deep friendship developed between master and pupil. For three years, Graetz lived and studied in Oldenburg, acquiring great proficiency both in Jewish and secular studies, but finally decided to return home and seek some occupation.

His parents meanwhile removed to Kosten, a larger town near Posen. On coming there, he attempted to preach in various places. His sermons did not enthuse the people, though they were impressed with his knowledge. He was therefore advised by friends to enter a university, obtain a doctor's degree and present himself as a candidate for a Rabbinical post. In order to acquire some money for that purpose, he accepted a position as a tutor in a certain wealthy family, which post he occupied for a year and a half. At the end of that time, he went to Breslau and entered the university.

From that time on, the literary activity of Graetz begins. Breslau was in those years, as we know, a center of the religious controversy between the Orthodox and the Reform parties which was expressed in the struggle between Tiktin and Geiger (Sec. 63). The future historian, while he did not ally himself officially with either of the contending parties, yet his sympathies were on the side of Orthodoxy, though he did not entirely agree with the type represented by Tiktin. At that time he came under the influence of Frankel, who as we know, (Sec. 67) advocated a middle way in Judaism, and like him, contracted an antipathy to the Reform movement. This antipathy he expressed in a series of anonymous articles in the monthly *Der Orient*, edited by Julius Fürst. The article attracted the attention of the Orthodox party and the name of the

writer soon became known. Another long article of his, published in the same monthly, containing a long and severe criticism of Geiger's *Lehrbuch zur Sprache der Mischnah* attracted still greater attention, this time also that of the scholarly world, and thus Graetz made his literary debut. To these early successes in the field of letters and scholarship, there was soon added that of his doctor's dissertation *Gnostizismus und Judenthum* (Gnosticism and Judaism) which was published in 1845. In that book, he discusses the relation between the theories of the Gnostics of the Christian Church and of Judaism in the Tannaitic period, and throws light upon the origin of Jewish mysticism, especially the type reflected in the *Sepher Yetzirah* (The Book of Creation, see Vol. I, Sec. 182). The treatise was received with great favor by the scholars who admired the young savant's erudition and skill of analysis of ancient texts and the elucidation of their contents. Graetz thus acquired his spurs in the world of learning.

The literary successes, however, did not provide the young author with a living and he turned to the Rabbinate. The first attempt though proved to him that his career did not lie in that direction. He applied for the post of rabbi at Gleiwitz in Silesia, but when about to preach his first sermon on the Eve of the Day of Atonement, he was overwhelmed by stage fright and forgot his sermon. This ended his Rabbinical career and he turned to teaching for which he prepared himself by attending a teachers' institute in Breslau. He was about to accept a position as the principal of a religious school which the Orthodox party at Breslau was preparing to establish, but due to the political disturbances in the year 1848, the plan was not realized. He then turned to journalism and received a commission from a leading journal in Breslau to act as its correspondent from Vienna. On his way to that city he stopped at Nikolsburg to visit his teacher Hirsch, who was rabbi there. The latter dissuaded him from continuing his journey and offered him a teacher's position in his own school which he accepted. The relations though between Hirsch and his former pupil were not as friendly as before, for the latter meanwhile began to deviate from staunch Orthodoxy though only in theory and not in practice. He became a contributor to Frankel's *Zeitschrift für die religiöse Interessen des Judenthums* and published there many important essays, among them also one entitled *Die Konstruktion der jüdischen Geschichte* (The Construction of Jewish History) of which

we will have more to say. In these articles he began to display more inclination towards the historical Judaism of Frankel than to the rigid Orthodoxy of Hirsch. Due to this somewhat strained relation between master and disciple, the latter left Nikolsburg and accepted a teaching position in the nearby city of Lundenburg. He then married in 1850 the daughter of the printer Monash of Krotoschin with whom he had fallen in love years before. In his new position he stayed for a few years and devoted himself to literary work, contributing to Frankel's new magazine the *Monatsschrift für jüdische Geschichte und Wissenschaft des Judenthums* and preparing to write his History. In 1852 however, he had to leave Lundenburg on account of a break between him and the rabbi of the town, and he decided to return to Germany. At that time he also broke with Hirsch, the cause being the refusal of Graetz's wife to wear a wig and his siding with her. He came to Berlin and through the intermediacy of Dr. Michael Sachs he was engaged as a lecturer in history in the classes for students of theology maintained by the Jewish community. In the year 1853, the Jewish Theological Seminary of Breslau was established with Zechariah Frankel as director who stipulated the appointment of Graetz to a professorship as condition of his acceptance of the position. The condition was complied with and the young scholar finally found his proper career.

From the year 1853 to the day of his death, for twenty-eight years, Graetz served as professor of Jewish history in the Seminary and trained a generation of rabbis and scholars. All this time he devoted himself, besides his teaching, to literary work. In the same year, there appeared the fourth volume of his History—this was the first published—covering the period from the destruction of the Second Temple to the close of the Talmud. It made a great impression, though no less a scholar than Zunz doubted the advisability of writing a Jewish history at the time. In 1856 there appeared the third volume dealing with the period from the Maccabees to the destruction of the Temple. The other seven volumes appeared at intervals until the year 1870 when the eleventh was published.

He then turned to the writing of the first two volumes covering the early period of Jewish history to the time of the Maccabees. For this purpose he went to Palestine in 1872 to visit the land in which the events he was about to describe took place. In 1874 the first volume was published and in the following year, the second in two parts making the total number of volumes twelve.

The success of the history was remarkable. It went through four editions in his life time, and was translated into French, English, Russian, and Hebrew. Besides he also issued in 1888 a popular edition of the history in three volumes. Graetz also edited the *Monatsschrift* from the year 1869-1888 when it temporarily ceased publication. His fame spread to all corners of scattered Jewry and his seventieth birthday in 1887 was celebrated by many Jewish communities throughout the world. Thus did the poor Jewish boy, whose ambition to study at the University of Prague was frustrated by the lack of five dollars, reach the heights of learning and honor through his indomitable will to learn and teach.

Turning to Graetz's literary activity, we must note that though it extended to many branches of Jewish learning as the numerous articles in the *Monatsschrift* testify, yet it was primarily limited to two important fields of scholarship, that of history and Bible exegesis. Of these two, his contribution to the former is the most noteworthy, for it is his great History on which his fame rests. It is, therefore, to his evaluation as an historian that we shall devote our main attention.

Graetz approached his task of writing the history of the Jews from the proper angle, namely by elaborating a point of view, or as we would say a kind of philosophy of history. A history is not merely a record of events and a statement of facts. The mere jotting down of a series of events which took place in the life of a group at a certain period of time is the work of a chronicler but not that of an historian. The task of the latter is not only to state the events but also to supply the reasons and the causes for their occurrence, and moreover to reveal to us the forces which were at work in the past life of the group or the people so that we may view that life as an organism in which the single events formed coordinated parts. To accomplish this purpose, the historian must possess a definite point of view or a philosophy of the history which he intends to write. Accordingly Graetz, previous to the publication of his first volume (the fourth of his History), elaborated his view of Jewish history in the above-mentioned article, the Construction of Jewish History, published in Frankel's *Zeitschrift* in 1846.

He starts out by criticizing the views of certain theological historians both of the right and of the left wings in Jewry who thought the essence of Judaism to consist either in a religious-ethical ideal or in a concrete system of laws. This, he says, may be good theology

but not history. Every great idea, says he, must create for itself a certain field of reality in which it can develop, act, and influence life. History is not only the reflection of that idea but also the criterion of its vitality, the proof how far it influenced and directed life. By the manifold forms of the past life of a people, we can trace the manifold of the idea which permeated that life, since these forms represent only the various phases of the idea in concrete realization. From that it follows that viewing Judaism as the idea of Jewish history, its essence is as many-sided as that history itself. The task of the historian is, therefore, according to Graetz, not only to relate the facts of Jewish history, but also to trace the spiritual forces which formed the manifestations of the idea or Judaism in life. In other words, the historian must not merely record facts but interpret them in the light of a dual relation between a great idea and life which affect and modify each other.

So far, Graetz made only a partial advance in the direction of the right conception of Jewish history, namely by recognizing the many-sidedness of Judaism or the spirit of the Jewish people as well as its development in life, and by rejecting the narrowness and abstraction of the theologians who not only limited Judaism to one phase but neglected the factor of life altogether. He, however, has not as yet touched upon the subject of the historical life, namely the people who experienced that life. His next step is to introduce that factor into history, and he does so by defining the essential characteristic of Judaism. Judaism, says he, is fundamentally opposed to paganism, for while the latter saw in nature the principle of all being, and subjected man to its dominance, the former subjected nature to the spirit. God, the central point in Judaism, the pure spirit, is above all, and both man and nature are of secondary rank. Man, however, is not a subjected but a free being, though it is his duty to obey God, and he thus assumes importance besides God. The essence of Judaism to whom both God and man are two focal points is, therefore, expressed along two lines, the knowledge of God and the well-being or the happiness of man. This happiness is not that of the individual but of the nation, for the great religious idea which is the soul of Jewish history must have had a body as its bearer, and that bearer was Israel. The life of Israel as a people, namely its political and social life, is then the substratum of Jewish history. In other words, the religious idea and the political idea form the two poles around which Jewish history revolves.

From this point of view, we note two forces in Jewish history, the religious idea and the social and political. These ideas were not always in harmonious relation, but at times struggled with each other for mastery. According to the relation of these two main ideas in Jewish past life, we can divide the entire history of the Jews into three large periods: a) The period of the First Commonwealth during which the political idea was dominant, though slowly the religious idea came more and more to influence life; b) the period of the Second Commonwealth when both the religious and the political ideas held sway; and c) the period of the exile which marks the ascendancy of the religious and the spiritual idea.

These views developed by Graetz in the early period of his activity as a historian were the guiding lines in the writing of his history, though they were later somewhat modified by him. Even at this stage, though he still uses the terminology of the idealistic philosophy of history which saw in the life of nations primarily a development of an idea, yet he does not overlook the importance of other factors and considers the Torah, the people of Israel, and the land of Israel as the unified group of subjects of Jewish history, each of which cannot be separated from the other, nor its value minimized. Later, during the actual writing of the History he became more and more convinced of the great role the various phases of the life of the Jewish people played in the history of the Jews. He thus presents his later view in his introduction to the fifth volume of his History which covers the period from the close of the Talmud to the end of the Gaonate. The subjects of Jewish history during the Middle Ages, says he, are two, the people of Israel which is the matter and body of that history, and Judaism which is its soul and form. The relation between the two and their influence upon each other constitutes the essence of Jewish history in the period of the exile. To describe the political situation of the Jews in the lands of dispersion, the formation of Jewish centers, the discovery of the laws and forces which caused both the building of these centers and their ultimate dissolution, all these are the task of the historian in his attempt to delineate the story of the body of Israel. Again, the tracing of the rise of the Torah, following its development through the ages in all its various phases and stages, including its relation and contact with other cultures and philosophies, as well as the biographies of the men of spirit, form the content of the history of the soul of Israel. He further says, "Even after the close of the

Talmud, Jewish history is still stamped with the impress of nationalism and it is still a history of a living nation. It is not a history of a sect or a religious group, for its subject is not only Torah or religion or ethics, but a living people. Literature and the story of persecutions and martyrdom are important phases of that history, but not its essence and reality."²¹ Graetz also emphasized the factor of the land of Israel in shaping the destiny of the history of the people. Not only was it the staying force of the Jews during their political life, but even in exile. The hope for redemption was one of the two forces which kept the nation from disintegration.

Thus, saturated with such views he became the historian of both the Jewish people and the Jewish spirit in all its mazes of development and all its manifestations. Of course, it must be admitted that as far as the larger period of Jewish history is concerned, namely the long period of the exile to which eight of his eleven volumes are devoted, Graetz is more the historian of the soul of the Jewish people rather than of its body, that is of the people itself as a social organism. In fact, he states that the history of that long period is primarily a history of culture. But he hastens to add that "the subject of that history is not the individuals, no matter how great they were, but the people as a whole."²²

As is well known, he was later taken to task by Dubnow, the historian of the Jews in our own time,²³ for his neglecting to follow the sociological method which sees the people as a whole as the only subject of history and as the only source of all the activities and changes of its life. However, the criticism falls short of its mark, for that method was hardly known at the time Graetz wrote his history. He, like Zunz and other Jewish scholars of his time, saw in the intellectual, spiritual, and literary activity of the Jews in exile the most intensive and extensive expression of the life of the people, but unlike them he did not limit history entirely to that phase for he also saw the life of the people in the material and secular aspects. It is true that he gave preponderance to the description of the spiritual development, but that follows logically enough from the very nature of Jewish history. After all, who can tell, when we see a people expressing itself for more than two millennia along certain lines of spiritual activity, that the concrete results of

²¹ Introduction to Vol. V (third, in Heb. Trans.) pp. 6 ff.

²² Ibid.

²³ S. Dubnow, *Weltgeschichte des jüdischen Volks*, Heb. trans. Intro. Vol. I, pp. 6, 12.

this expression embodied in literature and in the thoughts of the great men are not really the substance and essence of its history? Will we really be able to explain facts of history in any better light by assuming the mysterious concept of a people abstracted from all concrete expressions in life, and make it the source of all the activities in a manner of a *deus ex machina*? Can we in reality separate "the people" or even the spirit or the genius of the people from the sum total of the concrete expressions of its life? Such a separation and isolation leads to a conception which is just as dogmatic as the one which sees in Jewish history merely the unfolding of certain religious and ethical ideas. The truth lies, as always, in the middle. Jewish history is dominated by two sets of forces, those relating to the life of a distinct group as a social organism which wants to perpetuate its existence, and those relating to the development of the religious and ethical ideas which became the heritage of that group in its early youth, or, as Graetz aptly termed it, the soul and the body of Jewish history. These two sets of forces interacting through the ages, became both causes and effects of each other, and any one who wants to make one of these primary and the other secondary, errs. There were, however, periods, when due to circumstances, one set assumed in the life of the Jews an ascendancy over the other. Graetz was, therefore, right in giving preponderance in certain periods to the soul of the people rather than to its body, for at such times the life of the group expressed itself primarily in the form of spiritual activity, but, as said, he never forgot the body of Israel.

The dualism presented in Graetz's conception of Jewish history was matched by a dualism in his own personality which likewise influenced the nature of his history and endowed it with special characteristics. As we have seen, our historian was for a considerable period of his life under the influence of Samson Raphael Hirsch, the staunch champion of complete Orthodoxy. Later, however, he deviated from that path, and inclined towards the rational view of Judaism; but he only deviated and never forsook his earlier way of life. He limited his rationalism to thought only, and did not carry it into practice. He always remained loyal to Jewish tradition and his love for it was great and deep. Consequently there was always a struggle going on in his soul between his love and loyalty to tradition and his rationalism.

It is because of this conflict that the History presents so many in-

consistencies. As a lover of tradition he vigorously opposed the Reform movement in which he saw only a superficial rationalism. This opposition is written largely over his entire eleventh volume, which deals with the history of the Jews in the nineteenth century. Due to his bias, he often minimized the activities of certain men and was unjust in the depiction of their character merely because he opposed their views.

On the other hand, as a rationalist, he could not accept the theory often propounded by Orthodoxy that the great men of the past were all above blemish, and in his description of the Tannaim and Amoraim, he could not restrain himself, with all the love he bore for them, to point out at times shortcomings in the character of some of these men. His rationalism crops out especially in the presentation of the early Biblical period. Graetz, though radical in his views concerning other Biblical books, was conservative in his attitude towards the Pentateuch. He accepts the Books of Moses as historical sources and relates the events stated there with piety and reverence, but attempts to rationalize the miracles, such as that the crossing of the Red Sea was made possible by a strong wind which swept the waters to one side and that the manna was only drops exuded by certain desert plants. Similar explanations are offered for other miraculous events. The most frequent formula used by him in the presentation of the story of miracles is: "And the people believed it as a miracle." He thus shifts the supernatural event from the sphere of the actual to the realm of psychology. He is freer in his narration of events recorded in the other historical books of the Bible. Here he arranges the order of the events in accordance with logical necessity, and does not always follow the records of the Books of Samuel or Kings. Such attempts are, of course, far from heretical, for earlier exegetes of the Bible, such as Ibn Ezra, Gersonides, Maimonides, and others had already endeavored to offer some rational explanation for the miracles, and no one dared to declare their writing heretical. Still there were many who took umbrage at Graetz's method. That these inconsistencies and inclinations towards rationalism at one time and towards strict traditionalism at another time were resented by both the right and the left wings in Jewry goes without saying. Yet, Graetz seemed to have gauged the spirit of the large masses in Jewry who were far from both extremes, for his work became the most widely-read book, cherished by great numbers in all the Jewries of the world.

Important as the point of view of Graetz on the character of Jewish history and his tendency to steer in a middle way which combines both rationalism and traditionalism are, these were not the main qualities which gave his history wide acceptance, nor the esteem it enjoys among all classes of Jews. There were other qualities in the work which contributed to its greatness and to the fame of the author.

There are, says Carlyle in his essay on history, two kinds of historians, artisans and artists. The artisan discharges his duty honorably; he collects the facts, sifts and arranges them in order and coherence, but does not create. The artist historian, on the other hand, like all artists, creates and invents. He not only describes the events but recreates the past and presents it as living. The artist must possess the qualities of imagination, vision, intuition, and love for his work without which it is impossible for him to penetrate into the secrets of the past and discover the connecting threads in the web of history. Graetz was both artisan and artist.

He first of all possessed wide erudition and also a special historic sense for finding facts in places where their presence was hardly suspected. Second, he was endowed with a rich imagination and with an intuition for concatenating facts by means of cause and effect. Finally, his love for his people was great and deep. He always felt that he is writing the history of his people and he merged his own personality with its vicissitudes. He rejoiced in its fortunes and participated in its sufferings; he gloried in the greatness of its leaders, was proud of the heroism of its warriors and martyrs, and was edified by the sanctity of the pious. He felt the pulse of the national life which was beating in every generation and temporarily identified himself with it.

His imagination helped him to see the history as a whole and connect the numerous data in a definite order. It was by means of this imagination coupled with a historical intuition that he was able to find the connecting links in the thousands of scattered events which the peculiar history of a dispersed people presents. True, his hypotheses are often artificial and the connection a bit forced, but there is much intuitive feeling in them.

Of great importance is his original contribution to the actual material of Jewish history. He found much material ready which was prepared by his predecessors and contemporaries, but he also added much himself. To this, there testify the numerous long notes

added to each volume, some of which are small treatises on certain historical subjects. The value of the History was enhanced by the quotations and excerpts from the writings of the men he describes and from historical documents.

To all these we must add the quality of his style and the skilful method of presentation. The style possesses lucidity, vigor, and vividness. The method consists in using various devices in order to impress the readers with the importance of events or epochs. One of the devices is the use of epithets or labels for particular men or incidents. These epithets often characterize in one word the many-sided qualities of a man, or summarize the characteristics of a period. Another device is the search for contrasts in history and setting them against each other. Thus he includes Baruch Spinoza and Sabbatai Zebi in one chapter. These two men, the opposite of each other, the one an extreme rationalist, and the other a misguided mystic and dreamer, are placed together by Graetz, in order that their various activities which were of far-reaching influence be remembered by the reader. Moreover, he even points out a likeness in the results of the activities of both men, as they tended to undermine the existence of Judaism. All these qualities together made the History of Graetz an outstanding contribution to Jewish learning during the last century.

Still, with all our admiration for this stupendous work, we must not be blind to its defects, some of which are very serious and impair to an extent the value of the book. One of the grievous shortcomings of the work is the excessive subjectivism of the author. It is quite true that we can hardly expect a historian to be entirely objective. As stated before, the artist historian is not a recorder of events but a recreator of the past, and as such he must undoubtedly impress his personality and his view upon the work he fashions. But that subjectivism must be kept within bounds and must not be allowed to overrule the sober historical judgment. With Graetz, this is not the case. His personal likes and dislikes of men and movements are too evident in many of his pronouncements over them. The dualism of his personality which was noted above, namely his oscillation between rationalism and traditionalism aggravated matters. It caused either the minimizing of the value of persons and episodes or their exaggeration according to his state of mind at the moment of writing.

Graetz, as a rationalist, had a negative attitude towards the teach-

ings of mysticism in general and the Kabbala in particular. His delineation of the Kabbalistic movement is therefore deficient in many points. There is much erudition displayed in the collection of the material and in the presentation of the theories, but there is also evident a general tendency to emphasize the negative side of the movement as a whole. He was entirely blind to the positive virtue of mysticism, namely its deepening of the religious emotion and its arousing in the soul of the Jew the striving for communion with God. As a result of his attitude, he minimized the role played by many Kabbalists in Jewish life and presented their characters in a manner not in accord with their activity and influence. His prejudiced account of the quarrel between Jacob Emden and Jonathan Eybeschütz (Vol. II, p. 580) where Graetz presents the latter in an unfair light, is a striking illustration of his excessive subjectivism.

Again, though he was himself a Polish Jew, he shared the prejudices of the German Jews towards their Polish brethren. This caused him to underestimate the services of some of the leading Maskilim to the cause of enlightenment and he even cast slurs on their character. He did not, in general, appreciate sufficiently the role played in history by the Russian Jewish center, nor the value of the movements which arose there during the first half of the last century.

His eleventh volume which covers Jewish history to the year 1848 is limited almost entirely to the activities of German Jewry and passes over in silence the Jews of Russia. The rise of modern Hebrew literature and its leading spirits, such as Isaac Baer Levinsohn and the poet Abraham Baer Lebensohn find no mention in that volume. Again his strong opposition to the Reform movement caused many biased judgments of the characters of its leaders and of the motives and aims of some of its founders.

Another defect is the arrangement of the facts and events, especially in the part dealing with the period of the Middle Ages. In that period when the Jews were scattered throughout the world, and centers of settlement were established in many lands, the arrangement of the multitude of data in some definite order and sequence presents a serious problem. Here the historian has to deal with events which occurred simultaneously in various lands in different parts of the world. Graetz did not solve this problem satisfactorily. On the whole, he follows the chronological method, that is he discusses the history in the order of time, and is often forced to include events which transpired in different countries under various condi-

tions and circumstances in one chapter. The reader is thus carried from country to country, from Europe to Asia or to Africa too rapidly and without the proper transition, and this results in a certain confusion. Again, he sometimes labels a chapter by a title which only denotes some characteristics of the span of time covered in it, or after certain persons which were influential in that generation, but is by no means descriptive of its multifarious content. Thus the ninth chapter in Vol. VI bears the title, "The Jews in Germany," while the chapter itself deals not only with that subject but with the conditions of the Jews in Byzantium, Babylonia, Syria, Persia, Egypt, as well as the fate of the Karaites in many places. Chapters five and six in volume VII are entitled "The Age of Solomon ben Adret and Asher ben Yehiel," but the discussion extends not only to Spain where the two Talmudic luminaries resided, but also to Italy and England and many other lands. In this regard, an attempt was made by a later historian (Dubnow) to evolve a better method of arrangement of the facts and events of the much complicated Jewish history. Still even that method has its defects and disadvantages.

Notwithstanding these shortcomings, Graetz still remains the outstanding Jewish historian, and his History, the history of the Jews. It needs to be improved, supplemented, and completed, but remains the great edifice of the story of the past life of the Jewish people. It was said by several writers on Graetz that his work not only recorded Jewish history but also made history. Everyone who knows of the great influence it exerted upon thousands of assimilated Jews, how it brought back to Judaism many of its prodigal sons, the impression it created on such writers as George Eliot and others by unrolling before them the grand drama of the suffering of a noble people, will readily subscribe to that judgment.

The other phase of literary activity of Graetz was Bible exegesis. He became interested in this work while he wrote his two volumes on Biblical history and devoted to it the last twenty years of his life. The results of his labor in this field were: translations of the Books of Koheleth, Song of Songs, and the Psalms, supplied with critical commentaries, besides many articles on Biblical subjects in the *Monatsschrift*. In addition there was published a posthumous work containing notes to many books of the Bible and emendations of their texts.

He was not as successful in his exegesis as in his History. He

possessed a keen linguistic and exegetic sense, but simultaneously a mania for emendations. His subjectivism and love of conjectures came to extreme expression in his exegetic work. His emendations are often far-fetched though ingenious. Similarly, his theories about the date of composition of *Kohleth*—he placed it in the time of Herod,—the Song of Songs and many of the Psalms are flights of imagination. Much opposition arose therefore to his method of exegesis though he did not lack followers.

Graetz's fame rests primarily upon his history and will continue to flourish because of it.

CHAPTER XI

THE FIELD OF JEWISH LEARNING

81. BIBLE EXEGESIS AND TRANSLATIONS

The men, whose contributions to the various branches of Jewish learning were hitherto discussed, form the landmarks in a great and wide movement of intellectual productivity, the result of which is an extensive literature. It was they who laid the foundations of the edifice of that literature, quarried the stones for its upbuilding, and constructed large sections of the building proper. But there were many others who labored in that field and whose works enriched Jewish knowledge and contributed to the sum total of Jewish culture produced during the last century. Their work should not be overlooked, for they labored not in vain, as it is the collective activities of these modest scholars which constitute the bulk of that literature. It is to the survey of the work of these men in the various branches of learning that the present chapter is devoted.

As we have seen above, one of the principal tendencies of the first Haskalah movement was to revive interest, on the part of the Jews, in the Bible, its literature, and in the Hebrew language. It was for this purpose that Moses Mendelssohn undertook to translate the Pentateuch into German and to provide it with Hebrew commentaries with a view to explain the Scriptures in accordance with the plain meaning of the words and in harmony with the spirit of the Hebrew language and its grammar. It was this translation and commentary which initiated the new current of modern Bible exegesis, the leaders of which we are wont to call by the name of *Biurists* (commentators), from the word *Biur*, a commentary.

The activity of the *Biurists* lasted about thirty years and represents several stages. The first stage, which was described by us above (Sec. 19), consisted of the translation into German of single Biblical books and providing them with Hebrew commentaries. The moving spirits in this activity were, as was stated, Joel Löwe Bril, Aaron

Wolfsohn, and Isaac Eichel. The Five Scrolls with the exception of *Kohleth*, which was commented and translated by Mendelssohn himself, were translated and commented jointly by Bril and Wolfsohn. The Book of Psalms, translated by Mendelssohn, was provided with a Hebrew commentary by Bril, and Eichel translated and commented the Book of Proverbs.

The second stage of the exegetic activity of the *Biurists* covers the further translation and commentation of other Biblical books, an activity in which the participants were, besides Bril and Wolfsohn, Moses Arnswalde, Meir Obernik, Samuel Detmold, Israel Neumann, Joseph Wolf, and others. These exegetes translated and commented most of the Prophetic and Hagiographic books and their work was closed by a complete edition of the entire Old Testament under the name of *Kitbē ha-Kodesh*, i.e. the Holy Scriptures, published under the editorship of Samuel Detmold at Vienna in the years 1817-1818. In this edition there were included the Pentateuch issued by Mendelssohn and the books translated and commented by the exegetes of the first and second stages of *Biuristic* activity.

The third stage represents new translations and commentaries on various books of the Bible. It was completed by a new edition of the entire Old Testament with a German translation together with commentaries under the general name of *Biur*, published under the editorship of Moses Landau in Prague in the years 1833-37. This last edition of the *Biur* Bible which became the accepted one and the most widely studied, especially in Eastern Europe, differs from the former in that it left untouched only the Pentateuch, the Five Scrolls, Psalms, and the Twelve Prophets, as they were previously translated and commented, while all the other books were rendered anew into German and provided with Hebrew commentaries. The scholars participating in this last edition were, in addition to the earlier exegetes, Wolf Mayer (commentaries on Joshua, Isaiah, Books of Kings, translations of and commentaries on Books of Samuel, Proverbs, and Daniel); Moses Landau (translations of Books of Joshua, Isaiah, Judges, and Job, and also commentaries on the last two books); Joseph Weisse (translations of Books of Kings and Chronicles and commentaries on the latter); Mordecai Goldmann (translations of and commentaries on Books of Ezra and Nehemiah); Solomon Sachs (translation of and commentary on Jeremiah); and Abraham Benesch (translation of and commentary on Ezekiel).

The value of the new *Biur* Bible consists, first, in the improved

commentaries which were written in a new spirit differing greatly from the older commentaries, and in which the results of later investigations in the field of Biblical exegesis were incorporated; second, in the introductions with which each book is provided. As a rule, there are two introductions to each book, one written by the commentator of the book and the other by Judah Leib Ben-Zeeb (Sec. 19) as a part of his general introduction to the Bible. Both of these introductions discuss the content of each book, the style of the prophet or the poetic form, if the book is one of the Hagiographa, historical and chronological problems, as well as the division of the book into parts. Some introductions also contain valuable notes on the location of the places mentioned in the book. As a rule Ben-Zeeb's introduction is more of a general nature and does not enter into a detailed discussion of the books, as the introductions of the individual commentators. He displayed, on the whole, little originality as he followed mainly Eichhorn's *Einleitung in die Bibel*. Landau's edition of the Bible was reissued again in Wilna in 1841 by the poet Abraham Dob Lebensohn and Isaac Benjacob, with additional comments of their own under the name of *Biurim Hadashim* (New Comments).

The Prague (Landau's) edition of the *Biur* Bible marks the end of the first Haskalah movement in Western Europe, and also the lessening of the exegetic activity in the Hebrew language. From this time, the work in this field of Jewish learning was mostly carried on in German or in other European languages. It was also carried on in a more critical and scientific spirit. The activity became widespread with the rise of the Reform movement when the religious interest was concentrated upon the Bible; almost every learned rabbi found it necessary to offer a new translation of or comment on one or more books of the Bible, in which work he could display his critical keenness and his exegetic ability, and often, also his poetic skill.

On account of the multitude of translations and commentaries, it is impossible to mention all, and we shall limit ourselves to the most noted. Of these the best known are: the translation of the Book of Psalms by Michael Sachs (1808-1864) furnished with a scientific commentary and distinguished by its penetration into the spirit of the Hebrew language and the nature of Hebrew poetry; and the translation of the Pentateuch and the Book of Job together with commentaries by Heimann Arnheim. A complete new translation of the Old Testament into German—both language and script—was

made in 1837 by a number of scholars, among whom were Julius Fürst and Michael Sachs under the directorship of Leopold Zunz. The translation which, as stated above, saw thirteen editions, is distinguished both by beauty of style and fine exegetic interpretation. Two years later there appeared Solomon Herxheimer's translation of the Bible with a short historical commentary which gave the gist of both Jewish and non-Jewish exegesis. In the same year there began to appear Ludwig Philippson's translation of the Bible which contained also introductions to each book and a long detailed commentary. This translation, though incorporating results of critical investigations is yet conservative in spirit, and endeavors, as the author claims, to explain the Bible by the Bible itself. The translations of Herxheimer and Philippson contain also the Hebrew text and that of Philippson also illustrations. The Philippson translation was published in a number of editions, some of which, however, contain only the translation without the text.

In order to counteract the influence of the liberal movement in Judaism there arose some in the Orthodox camp who began to interest themselves in Biblical exegesis. As a result, several translations of Biblical books and commentaries appeared which rendered and interpreted the Bible in traditional manner but in modern form based on linguistic and grammatical principles. The first and the most important of these commentaries is the one on the Pentateuch written in Hebrew by Rabbi Jacob Zebi Meklenburg of Königsberg (d. 1865), entitled *ha-Ketab we-ha-Kabbalah* (The Scriptures and Tradition). The purpose of the commentary was to show that the interpretation of the verses, as given by the bearers of the tradition of the oral law, harmonizes with the text of the Scriptures, provided we explain it properly. Meklenburg was conversant with Hebrew grammar and also possessed a secular education. He employed his knowledge to good advantage by introducing many shades of meaning and nuances in the various uses of Hebrew words, and especially in the use of prepositions and prefixes. It is by these discernments and minute analysis of each verse of the text that he succeeded in evolving the close relation between the traditional interpretations and the text proper. The commentary displays not only extensive Rabbinic erudition and a fine exegetic sense, but also a wide reading in Jewish philosophic literature. On the basis of this commentary, Rabbi J. Cosmann prepared a new German translation of the Pentateuch in 1852 where Meklenburg's interpretations were incorporated.

Samson Raphael Hirsch, the champion of the neo-Orthodox movement, also prepared a translation of the Pentateuch and the Psalms with a commentary expressing his view of Judaism. The commentary contains much of the homiletic but is distinguished by its spirit of genuine religiosity and deep love for the sacred writings.

A far greater attempt in the field of exegesis, namely to explain the Bible from the point of view of the Bible and based on a deep knowledge of the Hebrew language and its grammar was made by Rabbi Meir Lēbush Malbim (1809-1880) in his Hebrew commentary on the entire Old Testament known after his name as the *Malbim*. Rabbi Meir Lēbush was one of the leading Rabbinic scholars of the last century whose name and fame was widely heralded in all Jewry. His life was a checkered one, as he held a number of Rabbinical positions in leading Jewish communities, such as Kempen and Königsberg in East Prussia, Cherson, Moghilev and Krementshug in Russia, and Bucharest in Rumania. But in several of these cities, due to his indomitable spirit in championing the right conduct of communal affairs he frequently came in conflict with the leaders of the communities, and as a result, suffered much at their hands. In Bucharest, he was accused by some of his opponents of treason to the government and was put in prison where he was held for some time until Moses Montefiore personally came there to plead his case, and at his request the Prince released the Rabbi. He underwent a similar experience in Moghilev which resulted in his banishment from Russia, which decree was, however, later rescinded. Thus was the life of this famous rabbi embittered and full of tribulations. And just as his life was varied so was he many-sided in his knowledge. He wrote several books of Responsa, a commentary on the Code of Maimonides, a treatise on Hebrew syntax and synonyms under the name *Ayelet ha-Shahar* (The Dawn), and an allegoric drama *Mashal u-Melizah* (Allegory and Poetry). His great work, however, is the commentary on the Bible, for which he is still remembered. He was one of the few orthodox rabbis who devoted his attention to the study of the Bible and to the mastery of the science of the Hebrew language. His commentaries while aiming to explain the Bible according to the *Peshat* contain more than that. He laid down three principles which guided him in his work. First, that there is no redundancy in the prophetic style, either in words or phrases or in sentences and consequently the synonymous words or phrases have different meanings; second, that there is no accidental or ornate

usage in the prophetic language but that all words and phrases are employed for a special purpose; and third, that the words of the prophets contain, besides the ordinary meaning, also an inner and deeper one. He attempted to realize these principles in the commentary, and for this purpose he divided it into two parts, one devoted to the explanation of the single words, and the other to the meaning of the verses and passages as a whole. He is especially careful to distinguish between synonyms and elicit their nuances and thus elucidate the fulness of the prophecies. Rabbi Malbim is not unmindful of the poetic arrangement of the prophetic style, and in his comments, he follows as far as possible rhythm and meter. He also saw correctly enough that some chapters in the prophetic books were written at a later date than the one which tradition ascribes to them or that the Book of Psalms is not entirely of Davidic composition, and he endeavors to reconcile these views with that of tradition.

The same principles are utilized in the commentary on the Pentateuch, and here with more persistence, for his aim was to remove all difficulties from the Torah, and like Meklenburg, to prove the inherence of the interpretation of the text, as given in the oral law, in its very words. For this purpose he scrutinizes every synonym, prefix, and preposition and elicits the special significance of each. In order to make the close relation between the interpretation and the text evident, he reprinted in his edition of the Pentateuch the Tannaitic Midrashim to the legal parts of the Pentateuch, and thus comments simultaneously the texts of the Bible and the Midrashim. His commentary on the legal parts of the Bible is based on his treatise on syntax and synonyms, and with painstaking care he endeavors to show that the Tannaim of old interpreted the verses of the Bible in accordance with a deeper understanding of the Hebrew language. On the whole, the commentary of Rabbi Malbim, though not scientifically critical, is a distinct contribution both to Biblical exegesis and to the study of the methods of interpretation used by the promulgators of the oral law.

Ancillary to translations of Biblical books into German and to commenting them, much work was done by scholars in the field of Biblical criticism dealing both with problems of textual readings and those of an historical nature. We have already had the occasion to mention the interest in Biblical studies and the contributions to this subject of L. Zunz, Abraham Geiger, and H. Graetz. Besides

these, there also labored in that field S. Maybaum, H. Vogelstein, and J. Barth.

Interest in the spread of Biblical knowledge in a modern and scientific way, was also aroused among the Jews in other countries of Western Europe, and many scholars in those lands contributed to Biblical studies and exegesis. As early as 1831 Samuel Cahen of Paris published a French translation of the Old Testament with an extensive commentary written in a rationalistic spirit. To this translation was added a series of scientific studies and monographs on special subjects contributed by Solomon Munk, L. Zunz, Leopold Dukes, and others. Of the noted Jewish French scholars who increased our knowledge of the Bible we may mention Joseph Derenbourg and Joseph ha-Levi.

In Italy, besides the exegetical work of Luzzatto which was described above, there is to be noted the Italian translation of the Pentateuch and the Hebrew commentary joined to it by Isaac Samuel Reggio. He also contributed many essays on exegesis in the Hebrew annuals *Bikkurē ha-Ittim* and *Kerem Hemed*. The collaborators of these two leading scholars were Lilio (Hillel) della Torre, Benjamin Consolo and David Castelli. The first translated the Book of Psalms, the second, Job and Lamentations, and the third, Koheleth. The last also wrote many essays on the subject both in Italian and Hebrew.

An attempt was made in England as early as 1841 by Israel Lindenthal and others to translate the Old Testament into English but it proved unsuccessful. Ten years later there appeared Abraham Benesch's popular translation of the Bible known as the Jewish School and Family Bible. Of much greater scientific value are the translations into English of several of the books of the Pentateuch, and the commentaries on them by Marcus Kalisch (1828-1885). His commentaries are distinguished by keen penetration in the meaning of the Bible and are permeated by a critical spirit. He also wrote two volumes of Biblical studies. Important is also Michael Friedländer's translation of the Book of Isaiah, wherein he followed in his interpretation the commentary of Abraham Ibn Ezra to that book which he edited from manuscript and translated into English.

The Biblical studies by Jewish scholars extended also to the Apocrypha and the *Targumim*. As was noted above (Sec. 19), Judah Leib Ben-Zeeb had already translated the Books of Judith and Ben Sira into Hebrew and provided them with a commentary. Later

in 1825, Isaac Seckel Fränkel and Solomon Plessner translated all the Old Testament Apocrypha into Hebrew. The translation is written in pure Biblical Hebrew and was the only complete one until A. Kohana, assisted by a group of scholars, published a new translation in 1938. Critical studies in the Apocrypha were written by H. Graetz, A. Geiger, Alexander Kohut, and Nehemiah Brüll. The last one made a critical and thorough study of the Book of Susanna entitled *Das apocryphische Susanna Buch*.

More interest was centered on the *Targumim*. Besides the work of Luzzatto and Z. Frankel spoken of above (Sec. 76), many noted scholars contributed to this study.

One of the leading works in this field is the commentary by Rabbi Nathan Adler on the *Targum Onkelos* to the Pentateuch entitled *Netinah la-Ger* (A Gift to the Stranger, with reference to the fact that Onkelos or Aquila was a proselyte). The aim of the author is, as he tells in the preface, not only the explanation of difficult passages in the Targum, but to prove its complete harmony with the interpretation of the laws as given by the bearers of tradition. He asserts that Onkelos deviated from the literal translation of the verses only when such a rendering would oppose the interpretation of the propounders of the oral law, for the inculcation of that law among the people was his principal aim. Otherwise he followed the text as closely as possible. In the introduction Adler discusses the question whether Onkelos and Aquila were two persons or one. He agrees with many other Jewish scholars that both names denote the same person, but differs with them in regard to the composition of the *Targum*. He rejects their view that the *Targum* was composed later than Aquila's time and was only modeled after his Greek translation, but claims that Aquila himself rendered the Pentateuch into Aramaic in his old age, after he had mastered that language. Adler also edited the text of the *Targum*, and utilizing a number of manuscripts, he corrected many erroneous readings in the printed version. In addition, he edited and published an older Targumic commentary called *Patshegen*, accompanied by a *Masorah* on the *Targum*, and also left in manuscript a commentary on the pseudo-Jonathan (Vol. I, Sec. 72) entitled *Ahabat Yonathan* (The Love of Jonathan).

Of great value are also Wilhelm Bacher's many essays in the *Monatsschrift* on the various *Targumim*, and especially the thorough and detailed treatise of Abraham Berliner, *Targum Onkelos*. Even the subject of the Samaritan versions of the Pentateuch was included

in the studies. Abraham Geiger was the first who turned his attention to it in his *Urschrift* (Sec. 78), in his introduction to the Bible, and in separate essays. He was followed by Raphael Kirchheim (d. 1889) in his *Karmē Shomron* (Vineyards of Samaria), Samuel Kohn, and Adolph Brüll. The last also edited the Samaritan Pentateuch.

Besides the above mentioned introductions to the Old Testament by Geiger and Ben-Zeeb, one was written later by Samuel Davidson from a critical point of view. Histories of Biblical literature were composed by Julius Fürst and David Cassel.

82. GRAMMAR AND LEXICOGRAPHY

Following the activities of some of the leading grammarians of the first Haskalah period whose works in the field of the science of the Hebrew language was noted above, there began an intensive productivity in the branches of grammar and lexicography, both Biblical and Talmudic, in all their phases. Attention began to be paid to such subjects hitherto studied only by a few, as for instance the *Masorah* and the development of the vowels and the accents. The first to investigate this branch of grammar was Wolf Heidenheim (1757-1832) whose contributions to Jewish liturgy, Bible, and Hebrew poetry are many and valuable. His *Mishptē ha-Teamim*, a treatise on the accents, deals with the subject thoroughly, though it contains primarily excerpts from earlier grammarians. This was followed by his edition of the Hebrew Pentateuch called *Humesh En ha-Sofer* where he produced a most correct Masoretic text, together with valuable notes on the *Masorah*. It was primarily intended as a guide for the writers of the scrolls. Solomon Frensdorff (d. 1880) devoted himself entirely to the study of the *Masorah*. He edited from manuscripts the *Masorah Magna* (Large Masorah) and the *Oklah we-Oklah* (Vol. I, Sec. 91), an old Masoretic book of great importance, and wrote a dictionary of the *Masorah* where all its terms are alphabetically arranged and explained. Great work in the field of Masoretic study was done by C. D. Ginsburg who published in 1880-86 his three volume work on the *Masorah* in English. There he treated the entire subject exhaustively in all its phases and details, both historically and critically. H. Graetz, Geiger, S. Pinsker, and W. Bacher also made notable contributions to this field.

There were many grammars of the Hebrew language written dur-

ing the last century. The most notable, from a scientific point of view, besides those of Ben-Zeeb and Luzzatto mentioned above, are the grammars by Hyman Hurwitz (d. 1884) in London, and Isaac Nordheimer, both written in English, by Leon Reggio in Italian, and by Solomon Klein in French. Very valuable are the two Hebrew works of Simḥa Pinsker, *Mebo le-Nikud ha-Ashuri* (Introduction to the Assyrian or Babylonian Vowel Point System, Vol. I, Sec. 99) and *Mishlê ha-Gisra we-ha-Beniah*. In the first, he discusses the Babylonian system of vowel points which was different from the accepted one, the Tiberian or the Palestinian. He was the first to make known to the world the existence of such a system. In the second he treats of the modes and conjugations of the Hebrew verb. Towards the end of the century, the philologist L. Barth published a number of works in the field of Hebrew and Semitic grammar which are considered as standard by scholars in the field. A popular Hebrew grammar entitled *More ha-Lashon* was written by H. Z. Lerner which, on account of its excellent arrangement, became the most widely studied in the schools of Eastern Europe. A more scientific grammar was composed by Joshua Steinberg, inspector of the Jewish Teachers Institute in Wilna, entitled *Ma'arkê Leshon Eber* (The Order of the Hebrew Language). It is based on the biliteral theory of the Hebrew roots.

Much was accomplished in the field of lexicography; dictionaries of the Hebrew tongue which render the meaning of the words in various European languages appeared in many countries, such as England, France, Germany, Italy, and Russia. The most noted of the dictionaries and lexicons are: the *Hebräisches und chaldäisches Handwörterbuch* by Julius Fürst, the *ha-Ozar* by Samuel Joseph Fünf, and the *Mishpat ha-Urim*, an encyclopaedic Biblical dictionary, by Joshua Steinberg. The first, covering all the Hebrew and Aramaic words of the Bible, is constructed on scientific principles, inasmuch as it employs the methods of comparative Semitic philology and also gives the various usages of the words in the Bible. The explanations are illustrated by numerous quotations. The second extends not only to the Hebrew and Aramaic words of the Bible but also to the linguistic material of the Mishnah and Talmud and of Mediaeval liturgic poetry. Unfortunately, however, it was not completed. The meaning of the words and terms are rendered in Russian and German, but the lengthy explanations and discussions are all in Hebrew. The third, encyclopaedic in character, contains many philological

remarks and offers numerous exegetical comments on the passages quoted as illustrations. Like the *ha-Oẓar* of Fün̄n, the articles are written in Hebrew, but the meaning of the words are also given in Russian and German. Fürst's contribution to Biblical lexicography was not limited to the dictionary. He also, in cooperation with Franz Delitzsch, revised and improved Buxtorf's Concordance and wrote a treatise on Aramaic idioms.

Great energy was displayed by Jewish scholars in editing and publishing the works of the Jewish grammarians and lexicographers of the Middle Ages. Leopold Dukes, in cooperation with Ewald, edited and commented Saadia's and Judah Ḥayyuj's grammatical and lexicographical treatises; Wilhelm Bacher published with notes and introduction Joseph Kimḥi's grammar, *Sefer Zikkaron*, Jonah Ibn Jannah's grammatical work, the *Rikmah*, and his lexicon, the Book of Roots. Friedländer and Kohn issued with notes and comments the grammar of Profiat Duran (Vol. II, Sec. 7), the *Ma'asē Ephod*, and similarly many more ancient treatises on the subject were brought to light by various scholars.

Many monographs and treatises were also written on the lives and works of these grammarians elucidating their theories and contributions to the science of the Hebrew language. Important treatises on the subject were written by B. Drachman on the place of Judah Ḥayyuj in the history of Hebrew grammar, by Ignaz Goldziher on *Tanḥum Yerushalmi*, by Steinschneider, and especially by Wilhelm Bacher. The latter wrote a monograph entitled *Ibn Ezra als Grammatiker* and a series of works on Jonah Ibn Jannah, among which is one on his life and works. He also wrote a history of the science of the Hebrew language in two parts, the first called *Die Anfänge der hebräischen Grammatik*, and the second entitled *Die hebräische Sprachwissenschaft vom 10ten bis zum 16ten Jahrhundert*, covering the periods from the sixth to the tenth century, and from the tenth to the sixteenth respectively. A short history of Hebrew lexicography was also given by Julius Fürst in the introduction to his dictionary.

Great attention was also paid to Talmudic lexicography. The first to enter the field was a Talmudic scholar, Isaiah Berlin (1719-1799). He devoted himself to the completion and improvement of the famous Talmudic dictionary, the *Aruk* by Nathan ben Yehiel of Rome (Vol. I, Sec. 148). His edition of the *Aruk* contains his notes and comments which are printed at the end of each section. The comments, arranged according to the letters of the alphabet, are

entitled *Hafla'ah she-be-Araḳin* (The Distinction of the Articles) and consist mostly of corrections of the Talmudic citations given in the *Aruk* as well as improved readings. He was followed by Moses Landau who in the years 1819-1824 published an enlarged edition of the *Aruk* in four volumes. He added the German translation of the words and terms and also gave the Greek and Latin origin of many of the Talmudic terms. In this he mainly followed Buxtorf's Talmudic Lexicon. His main contribution consisted in the historical and archaeological notes wherein he clarified the content and meaning of many of the articles. His work, however, was far from perfect, and was severely criticized by Rapoport in his biography of Nathan, as was stated above. Rapoport contributed much towards the improvement of this great work, but the linguistic phase formed only part of his study.

This great Talmudic encyclopaedic dictionary of the Middle Ages found its complete perfection in the edition of Alexander Kohut (b. 1844 d. 1894) in eight large folio volumes, entitled *Aruk ha-Shalem* (The complete Aruk). Though nominally an edition of an older work, in reality it is an original contribution of the first rank. This can be seen from the fact that the *Aruk* which was usually published in one fair-sized quarto volume was in Kohut's edition expanded to eight large volumes. The editor was fully equipped to undertake this stupendous work. He was well versed in Talmudics, a master of the classical languages, and also knew the Oriental languages including Persian. He utilized all his linguistic accomplishments and deep Talmudic erudition in the preparation of his work to which he devoted half of his short life.

The qualities of this work are numerous, some of which are the following. First, the text was edited by collating it with seven manuscripts, each sentence was carefully scrutinized, all errors corrected, and deficiencies supplied. Second, hundreds of quotations from the Talmud and other Rabbinic books which were stated erroneously in earlier editions or given briefly without references were corrected, completed, and the references supplied. Third, numerous new articles and words were added by the editor. Fourth, the most important of all is the philological contribution; all words are traced to their sources in Greek, Latin, Syriac, Arabic and Persian. The derivation of many words from the last-named language throws much light upon hundreds of Talmudic passages which, due to Nathan's lack of knowledge, were interpreted by him incorrectly.

Finally, Kohut added notes and comments which explain both Nathan's text and the passages quoted from the extensive Talmudic literature. The edition also furnished indices of all Biblical verses, and passages from the Talmudic, Midrashic, and Targumic literature. Kohut thus contributed not only to Talmudic lexicography, but also to Rabbinic exegesis, Midrashic literature, and the history and geography of that period and made of the *Aruk* a veritable encyclopaedia on all these subjects.

Of the works of the other scholars in this field, the most noteworthy are the work of the brothers Simon and Mordecai Bondi *Or Esther* published in 1812, where the Greek and Latin derivations of many Talmudic words are given, and the large Talmudic, Midrashic, and Targumic dictionaries of Jacob Levy (d. 1892) and Marcus Jastrow (d. 1905). The first entitled *Neuhebräisches und chaldäisches Wörterbuch über die Talmudim und Midrashim* is, like Kohut's, a stupendous work, and the erudition displayed there is outstanding. Jastrow's dictionary is somewhat shorter, but likewise one of the most valuable works in the field. It is written in English and forms one of the highest contributions of American scholarship to Jewish learning. Lexicographical labors on a smaller scale but of great value were performed by Joseph Perles (1835-1894) in his treatises, *Etymologische Studien* and *Beiträge zur rabbinischen Sprach- und Alterthumskunde* (Contributions to Language of Rabbinic Lore and Study of Antiquities) and by Michael Sachs in his work *Beiträge zur Sprach- und Alterthumsforschung*. Sachs displayed an exceptional linguistic keenness in his determination of the meaning of Midrashic terms and phrases. Others who added to the knowledge of Talmudic lexicography were Adolph Jellinek, Israel Böhmer, Adolph and Nehemiah Brüll, and many more.

83. TALMUDIC LITERATURE AND JEWISH LAW

The second great branch of Jewish learning in which the desire for knowledge and investigation found expression was that of the Talmud and its literature in its two great divisions, Halakah and Agada in all their phases and ramifications. The study of the Talmud in the traditional manner had greatly diminished among the Jews of Western Europe from the beginning of the Modern Period. The old type of academies, where study was limited mainly to the Talmud, the codes, and their commentaries, had practically ceased to exist in the Western countries and continued to flourish only in

the ghettos of Eastern Europe and such border countries as Hungary and Galicia. Yet interest in that field of knowledge, which occupied such an important place in Jewish education for almost two millennia, did not abate in modern times even among the most liberal and progressive Jewries. A strong desire arose on the part of the scholars to present the teachings and views of the Talmud and its literature in their manifold aspects to the learned world at large, to trace their development, to expound their meaning, and to appreciate their value as elements of human culture. As a result of the labors of numerous scholars, there was created a vast literature in Hebrew as well as in almost all European languages, covering the wide field of the Talmud and its ancillary subjects which can hardly be surveyed except in a special treatise devoted to that purpose. We can only trace its general lines and note the most important works.

The favored subject in this department of Jewish learning was at first that of Jewish law, both in its Biblical and Talmudic aspects. In 1828, Joseph Salvador (1796-1873) published his treatise, *Histoire des Institutions de Moïse* (The History of the Institutions of Moses). Salvador was a physician by profession but was deeply interested in social and legal problems. Though his mother was Catholic, he loved the Jewish people and admired their history and laws. Being still under the influence of the ideals of the French Revolution, he represents Moses as the founder of the first true republic and his institutions and laws as embodying the true principles of liberty, fraternity, and equality. Since he was ignorant of the Talmud and its interpretation of Jewish law, and was imbued with the spirit of a particular social philosophy, Salvador could not produce an all-embracing work on Biblical law, yet he displays in the treatise a keen penetration into the nature and character of the laws of the Pentateuch which he presents in a systematic order and with scientific precision. The work made a great impression at the time, and on account of its liberal spirit, aroused much opposition in conservative circles.

A more scholarly work on Mosaic law, entitled *Das mosaische Recht*, based on a deep study of the sources which also takes in consideration its relation to Talmudic law, was written by J. L. Saalschütz. Eduard Gans, the friend and collaborator of Zunz in the work of the Society for the Culture and the Science of the Jews (Sec. 66) and one of the leading jurists in Germany in the first half of the last century, also wrote several essays on the Jewish law of inheritance.

The epoch-making works of Zechariah Frankel in the field of Jewish law were described above (Sec. 76) and their characterization need not be repeated here. He was followed by Hirsch Fassel (1798-1883) who in a series of three works, *Das mosaisch-rabbinische Civilrecht*; *Das mosaisch-rabbinische Strafgesetzbuch*; *Das mosaisch-rabbinische Gerichtsverfahren*, covered the field of Jewish civil and criminal law and that of court procedure respectively. These works, however, are more in the nature of a collection of laws than scientific treatises on Jewish jurisprudence. Of great scientific value is the series of works on Jewish law by Moses Bloch, professor of Talmud in the Rabbinical Seminary at Budapest. The series which consists of the following volumes: *Das mosaisch-talmudische Polizeirecht*; *Die Civil process-Ordnung nach mosaisch-rabbinischem Rechte*; *Das mosaisch-talmudische Erbrecht*; and *Der Vertrag nach mosaisch-talmudischem Rechte*, covers police law, procedure of civil cases, and law of inheritance and of contract. A survey of the history of Mosaic Talmudic law was also given by Israel M. Rabinowich in the introduction to his translation into French of several tractates of the Talmud.

Treatises on limited phases of Jewish law or on subdivisions of its various branches are too numerous to count. Attempts were also made by several scholars to construct a philosophy of Jewish law. Thus Hirsch B. Fassel wrote a treatise on the Mosaic-Talmudic Law and Ethics. Monographs were also written on subjects ancillary to Jewish law, as "On the Position of Slaves Among the Jews According to the Bible and the Talmud" by Zadok Kahn, and "On the Family in the Mosaic-Talmudic Law" by P. Buchholtz.

Law is undoubtedly one of the important aspects of the Talmud, but as we know this collection of books contains the sum total of Jewish learning and thought for a period of close to a thousand years; consequently it has many other aspects. These were not neglected by the students of the Modern Period. Thus, L. Lazarus wrote a work on the ethics of the Talmud and J. Wiesner and M. Jacobson on the psychology contained therein. The natural sciences as they are reflected in the Talmud and its literature were made the subject of a number of important studies by scholars in their respective fields, among them *Die Zoologie des Talmuds* by L. Lewysohn, rabbi at Stockholm, *Die Botanik des Talmuds* by M. Duschak, and finally the most exhaustive treatises, *Die aramäischen Pflanzennamen* and *Die Flora der Juden* by Immanuel Löw. The last work is of impressive quantity, as it consists of four bulky volumes and is of

exceptionally high quality. It covers the entire field of botany as it is referred to in the entire Jewish literature, but with special attention to the Talmudic branches. The author displays in it great erudition both in Jewish lore and in the Oriental languages, as well as a mastery of the field of botany. Benedict Zukermann wrote on Coins, Measures and Weights in the Talmud and Daniel Ehrmann on Mathematics. Medicine in the Talmud was discussed by a number of physicians and scholars, notably by I. M. Rabinowitch, the translator of the Talmud into French, A. Schwab and Joseph Bergel.

All these presentations of the various aspects of Talmudic literature represent only a fraction of the work done in the field of Talmudics. The greater part of scholarly activity was devoted to the Talmud and its constituent elements proper, namely to the investigation of the historical development of both the Halakah and the Agada, the elucidation of their methods of interpretation, their terminology, rules of deduction, history of tradition, and the characterization of the leading Tannaim and Amoraim. This extensive activity can be subdivided into the following divisions: (a) critical and correct editions of Halakic texts; (b) rules of deduction, methods of study and interpretation, and terminology; (c) introductions to the Mishnah, Talmud and literary history; (d) biographies and characterization of the methods and contributions of the individual Tannaim and Amoraim; (e) the nature, methods and views of the Agada, and the historical development of its collections; (f) miscellaneous critical studies and investigations in the field.

The study and investigation of the earlier Halakic sources antecedent to the Mishnah, was a necessary condition for the scientific presentation of the teachings of the Halakah. It forms one of the great contributions of modern Talmudic learning. This phase of the Halakah was, with few exceptions, neglected by the Rabbinic scholars. It is only with the rise of the more critical study of the Talmud that the sources of the Mishnah began to be explored. The work in this field could not be carried on unless the text of the earlier Halakic works were edited critically and provided with comments and explanatory notes. To this phase of Talmudics were devoted the labors of Meir Friedmann and Isaac Hirsch Weiss (Sec. 89), both great Rabbinic scholars and professors at the Theological Seminary in Vienna, David Hoffman, and others. The first edited the Tannaitic Midrashim, the *Sifre* on Numbers and Deuteronomy, and the *Mekilta* to Exodus. Friedmann edited the texts and corrected

many readings by collation with manuscripts and first editions. He also provided commentaries, many critical notes, and extensive introductions (written in Hebrew) where the nature of the books, the method of Halakic deduction, and their dates of composition are discussed. Weiss edited the *Sifra*, the Tannaitic Midrash on Leviticus, and also the *Mekilta* with notes, commentaries, and introductions. David Hoffman later published from manuscript another Tannaitic Midrash to Exodus, which was hitherto known only from excerpts in works by Mediaeval scholars. This Midrash was called *Mekilta di Rabbi Shimon ben Yohai* (the disciple of Rabbi Akiba). The standard *Mekilta* is, as is well known (see Vol. I, Sec. 43), ascribed to Rabbi Ismael, the colleague of Rabbi Akiba. In the introduction (written in Hebrew), the author discusses the nature of the newly discovered Midrash, its date of composition, its composite construction, and its relation to the standard Tannaitic Midrashim. The same scholar subsequently edited parts of another Tannaitic Midrash to Deuteronomy, also called *Mekilta*.

To the noteworthy contributions of the second division belong, besides numerous articles in periodicals and the valuable chapters on the subject in Z. Frankel's *Darké ha-Mishnah* (Sec. 76), the series of works by Aryë-Leib Schwarz on several of the thirteen rules of interpretation established by Rabbi Ismael. The books written in German deal in great detail with Talmudic logic. In his treatise on the *Kal we-Homer* (a fortiori) rule, he elucidates with great skill and logical acumen the various applications of this much-used rule of deduction, its forms and principles, as well as its logical substratum. Schwarz's treatises contributed greatly to a deeper understanding of the ways and methods of the Halakah.

Numerous works by various scholars were devoted to the subject of the construction and historical development of the Halakah either in the form of introductions to the principal works of Talmudic literature, or as essays and treatises on special phases. The noted of these are *Zur Einleitung in die halachischen Midraschim* by David Hoffman; the *Mebo ha-Mishnah* by Jacob Brüll; *Die erste Mishnah*, by D. Hoffman; and *Über den Zusammenhang, die Quellen und die Entstehung der Mishnah* by Ludwig Rosenthal. The first is an introduction to all the Tannaitic or Halakic Midrashim on the Pentateuch. The author discusses there the method of interpretation of the Bible employed by the early Tannaim, their rules of deduction, the schools to which the various Midrashim belong, and the dates

of composition of these books. The second work is intended as an introduction to the entire Halakah as embodied in the Mishnah. The method followed is similar to that employed by Frankel in his *Darké ha-Mishnah*. It is divided into two parts, the first dealing with the bearers of Halakic tradition, from the Great Assembly to Judah the Prince, the redactor of the Mishnah. In this part the contributions to the Halakah of over a hundred men whose names are mentioned in the Mishnah are analyzed and described and their time and the schools to which they belonged determined. The second part is devoted to the Mishnah proper. It discusses the arrangement of the six orders, the sequence of the tractates, the method used by the editor, Judah the Prince, in indicating the decision of the law, usually known as the *Setam Mishnah*, i.e. the anonymous legal statement (see Vol. I, Sec. 48) and many more things which help us to understand the Mishnah as a whole. In general, the author displays great Talmudic erudition, and his remarks certainly throw light upon many phases of the Mishnah and illuminate a number of aspects in the history of the Halakah, but he lacks both a critical method of examination of the material at hand and the sense of discerning between the various layers of the Halakah as they are reflected in the Mishnah. The book, therefore, while representing a great amount of scholarly work, cannot compare with Frankel's *Darké ha-Mishnah*, though in a number of points it improved upon the views and hypotheses of the former.

The third treatise does not intend to serve as introduction to the Mishnah as a whole, but merely investigates certain of its important phases, especially the constituent elements of which the Mishnah in its last redaction of Judah ha-Nasi consists. Hoffman, in his monograph, *The First Mishnah*, made a valuable contribution to the subject of the composition of this Halakic work. He proves that the first layer of the Mishnah was organized much earlier than hitherto supposed. It was usually held that Rabbi Akiba (d. 135 C. E.) was the first to lay the foundations of the Mishnah, but he claims that its first layer can be safely said to have been compiled about forty years before the destruction of the Temple by the early successors of Shammai and Hillel, or rather the schools of these two leaders (Bet Shammai u-Bet Hillel). This layer consisted of groups of Halakot on certain legal subjects. It was later incorporated by Akiba in his Mishnah, and thence by Rabbi Meir in his, and finally by Judah in the standard edition. He also explains that many controversies between later

Tannaim arose not in differences about the law itself, but merely in the different readings each of the contestants had in the earlier text of the Mishnah. Hoffman's monograph was translated into Hebrew by Samuel Greenberg.

On the basis of these conclusions and utilizing the studies by later scholars, Ludwig Rosenthal carried on his investigations in the composition of the Mishnah and its sources on a larger scale. The result of his labors was the volume referred to above. The work is divided into three parts, the first one published in the nineties of the last century, and the other two in 1918, to which was added a second edition of Part I. In this rather comprehensive work, the author investigates all the layers of the Mishnah and its sources. He finds that the standard edition of Judah ha-Nasi consists of a number of earlier collections and sets to work to describe and classify them. He divides the entire period of the development of the Mishnah into three epochs: from the early days to Hillel; from Hillel to Akiba; and from Akiba to Rabbi. The first part is devoted to the discussion of the Mishnah collections of the first epoch, of which, in the opinion of our author, there were two; the earlier was compiled in the time of Simon ben Shatah (ca. 106 C. E.) and the second in the time of the Prince Hyrcanus the Second (ca. 50 C. E.). He thus goes further than Hoffman and antedates the first attempt of arranging a Mishnaic collection by one hundred and fifty years. He assigns as the reason for such collection the desire on the part of the Pharisaic scholars to place before the students a group of statements embodying their views on the matters contested by the Sadducees.

The second part deals with the Mishnah collections from Hillel to Akiba. Rosenthal introduced in the study of the Mishnah the method of Bible criticism. Accordingly he distinguishes in the Mishnaic development of this epoch three sources, the first which was used by the schools of Hillel and Shammai designated by him with the letter S; a second which emanated from the school of Johanan ben Zakkai, chiefly through the activity of Eliezer ben Hyrcanus and Joshua ben Hananya—this source is designated JE; and finally the Akiba source.

The third part discusses the development of the organization of the Mishnah from Akiba to Judah. The volume as a whole while mainly devoted to the sources of the Mishnah and their relation to each other, also sheds light on many other problems connected with

this standard Halakic work, facilitates our conception of it, and elucidates its character and nature. Especially valuable are the discussions regarding the relation of the Mishnah to the second great Halakic collection, the *Tosephta*. Rosenthal's volume, though some of its conclusions are more of a hypothetical nature, nevertheless represents a distinct contribution to Talmudic scholarship of the Modern Period.

The field of the Tannaitic Halakah was also enriched by the labors of other scholars, who devoted themselves to its other phases, such as the *Tosephta*. Thus Aryē Leib Schwarz, mentioned above, published a series of studies on parts of the *Tosephta* under the name of *Hegyon Aryē*; M. S. Zuckermann issued a critical edition of the *Tosephta* and also wrote a two volume work entitled *Tosephta Mischna und Baraita*, wherein he discusses in great detail and with exceptional erudition the relation of these Halakic collections to each other. All these works completed, enlarged, and enriched the knowledge of the extensive field of the Tannaitic Halakah.

While the subject of the development and the nature of the Tannaitic Halakah and its standard works, the Mishnah, the *Tosephta*, and the Halakic Midrashim found many investigators and students, less was accomplished in the field of the later Halakah which is embodied in the Gemarah or Talmud in the narrower sense. With the exception of the third volume of Isaac Hirsch Weiss' great work, *Dor Dor we-Dorshov* (History of Tradition, Sec. 89), we have few books which we can properly call introductions. Most of the works on the Talmud merely cover one or more phases of the Gemarah but do not cover that subject as a whole. Zebi Hirsch Chajes' *Mebo ha-Talmud* (An Introduction of the Talmud) hardly deserves its name though it is a valuable contribution to the knowledge of oral law. It is logically divided into two parts. The first is devoted to a classification of the legal content of both the Mishnah and Gemarah. The author divides all laws, the discussion of which is contained in the Talmud, into six classes and devotes a number of chapters to the elucidation of each. He is especially detailed in the description of the last two classes, namely ordinances and institutions (*Gezerot we-Takonot*) and even enumerates the most important of these in chronological order. He, however, displays little critical acumen in determining the date and the real authors of such ordinances and institutions, some of which are ascribed in the Talmud to the Patri-

archs, or to Moses, or to Joshua. He merely reproduces the Talmudic statements on their origin and does not test their accuracy.

The second part deals with the Agada of the Talmud, analyzing briefly its character and methods. He emphasizes the ethical purpose underlying most of the Agadic passages, and is thus able to explain many of the difficulties encountered in them, such as undue exaggeration or far-fetched interpretations of verses. The Rabbis, says Chajes, were well aware of the plain meaning of the verses, but they attached their teachings to the Biblical texts by means of these interpretations in order to provide them with greater authority, so that they may be received more readily by the people. He also endeavors to rationalize the many curious passages found in the Talmud, which often arouse our astonishment either by their gross anthropomorphism or by their recital of numerous miraculous events which took place during the lives of the Tannaim and Amoraim, or otherwise. He avers that some of the statements must not be taken literally, but symbolically as expressing a higher thought, and as to the miracles, they must be explained as visions seen or heard in dreams by the scholars of the period. On the whole, this part contains numerous comments and views which illuminate certain phases of the Agada.

Nehemiah Brüll's *Entstehungsgeschichte des babylonischen Talmuds als Schriftwerk*, though not dealing with the construction and the character of the Talmud as a whole, throws much light upon its redaction and upon a number of its fundamental characteristics, especially in its written form as a text for study. He analyzes in great detail the work of the *Saburaim*, that is the generations of scholars who came immediately after the close of the Talmud. It was their task to improve the text of this series of works and facilitate its study. It was not an easy undertaking, for the Talmud is the sum total of the intellectual activity of many generations, and in addition its content was transmitted orally. Rabbi Ashi, usually credited to have been its editor, was more interested in its arrangement and ordering than in the actual writing down of the contents. Even if we assume that he wrote down the Talmud (see Vol. I, Sec. 196), it was certainly not completed by him. It is the *Saburaim* who gave us the written text. Brüll traces with great skill their hand in the completion of that text, and enumerates the additions, corrections, and all other improvements introduced by these scholars.

84. WILHELM BACHER AND SOLOMON BUBER

We have thus far dealt primarily with the works in the field of Halakah. But the Agada was also not overlooked by the scholars of the last century. Since the appearance of Zunz's epoch-making work, *Die gottesdienstlichen Vorträge der Juden* (Sec. 72), the storehouse of Jewish thought and views, the Agadic literature attracted the attention of Jewish savants, and many of them contributed in numerous treatises to its better and deeper understanding. The greatest activity in this wide and ramified branch of Jewish lore, however, was displayed by two distinguished scholars, Wilhelm Bacher (1850-1913) and Solomon Buber.

The first, one of the most noted savants of the last century, of whose works in various fields of learning we have already had occasion to speak, was born in Lepto-Szent Miklos, a city in Hungary. He received his early education in the Jewish school of that city, and then entered at the age of thirteen, the Lyceum at Pressburg. Graduating from there in 1867, he matriculated at the university in Budapest. A few years later, he entered the Breslau Rabbinical Seminary, studying there under Frankel, Graetz, and other famous Jewish scholars. At the age of twenty, he was awarded the doctor's degree by the University of Leipzig for his dissertation on the Persian poet, Nizami. Six years later, he graduated from the Seminary (1876) and accepted a Rabbinical post at Szegedin, Hungary. Soon, however, (1877) he was called to occupy the chair of Bible in the newly-founded Rabbinical Seminary at Budapest, a position which he held until the day of his death. The erudition of Bacher was astounding. He was especially distinguished in linguistics, for he mastered not only the modern European, the classical, and the Semitic languages, but also Persian. He was practically conversant with the literatures of all nations, ancient and modern, but especially wide and deep was his knowledge of Jewish lore. The number of his works in various fields of learning reaches fifty and of his articles in many languages to a thousand. His greatest contributions, though, were made in the field of the Agada by his series of works: *Die Agada der Tannaiten* (1889-91); *Die Agada der babylonischen Amoräer* (1878); and *Die Agada der palästinischen Amoräer* (1892). These three works consist of six volumes and extend over more than three thousand pages.

The purpose of Zunz in his classical work on the Agada was to

survey the extensive field as a whole, describe its main characteristics, and delineate its divisions, but he did not attempt to classify and systematize the vast Agadic material proper, so that we may get a glimpse of its nature and character from its own statements and views. It is this particular task which was undertaken by Bacher. He aimed, as he says in his preface to the treatise on the Agada of the Babylonian Amoraim, to reveal to the world, in as detailed a manner as possible, the inner thoughts of the Agadists, their views on the most important subjects, such as God, the world, Israel and his destiny, and similar matters, and their complete view of life in all its phases. He thought that the best method to obtain that deep penetration in the soul of the Agadists was to collect all the sayings and statements of the leading scholars of the generations from Hillel (ca. 30 B.C.E.) to the last Amoraim in Palestine and Babylon (ca. 500 C.E.), and arrange them in a classified order according to the subjects they discuss. In this way we are able to estimate the character and views of each leading Tanna and Amora and his contribution to the Agadic literature. As an illustration of the extensive character of the work, we will describe briefly the chapter devoted to Joshua ben Hannanya, one of the disciples of Johanan ben Zakkai, a leading spirit of the second generation of Tannaim. The chapter is divided into four sections, in the first of which all the maxims and sayings revealing his own character and personality are quoted. The second contains his statements on the two chief subjects of Judaism, the study of the law and prayer. In the third are collected all stories, legends about the life of the Tanna, and reports of conversations held by him with the emperor Hadrian and Greek philosophers concerning many things, in brief, all passages where many phases of his teachings are reflected. The fourth section consists of his homilies and interpretation of verses in an Agadic manner. In this way, the entire activity of Joshua ben Hannanya, as a teacher of ethics, interpreter of religion, leader of his people, and even as one who delved into the mysteries of the universe and creation, are all exposed before us in his own words and statements. Thus, the six volume work of Bacher presents to us in the long series of Agadic monographs the greater part of the content of the Agada through the mouth of its own representatives. In addition, there are revealed before us the personalities of the bearers of Jewish tradition. There is hardly a phase of the Jewish national life and thought for over a millennium which is not explained and clarified.

However, we will greatly err if we think that all that Bacher did was to collect thousands of Agadic statements, classify them, and arrange them under the respective names of those who uttered them, though this work should not be minimized by any means. If we consider the extent of Agadic literature, the scattered and irregular manner in which the contents are given, we can gauge the amount of labor which entered in Bacher's arrangement. But there is much more than that in this work. Each chapter dealing with the contribution of a Tanna or Amora is really a monograph on the life and work of that teacher, and the sayings and passages are given in such a way as to present a complete picture of his teachings and views. The relations of the various remarks, verse interpretations, stories and fables to each other are expounded and traced, with the result that the chapter represents a literary mosaic of numerous parts welded into one whole.

There is still another phase to this work which can only be appreciated by students. This is the thousands of notes, wherein the author ascertains the correct versions of the maxims, cites parallels to statements both in Jewish and classical literature, traces proverbs and fables to their sources, and supplies historical and philological information. In these comments and remarks, Bacher displays his many-sided erudition in a remarkable degree. This series of works was translated into Hebrew by A. S. Rabinowitz and became a part of the modern Hebrew literature.

The works on the Agada are not the only contributions of Bacher to this field of Jewish learning. His *Exegetische Terminologie der jüdischen Traditionsliteratur* (The Exegetic Terminology of the Literature of Jewish Tradition) can be considered as a complement to the foregoing work. Neither the Agada nor the Halakah can be properly understood without an exact knowledge of the terms used by the scholars in their interpretation of the Bible, for the Scriptures are the centers of both branches of study. Bacher undertook to explain all terms used both by the Tannaim and Amoraim. The book is accordingly divided into two parts, the first devoted to the terms employed by the former, and the second to those added by the latter. The work is distinguished by a display of linguistic skill as well as a mastery of Talmudic literature on the part of the author, for not only are the terms explained and their derivations given, but the various nuances and the manifold usages are analyzed and expounded, and numerous quotations from the literature illus-

trating the usages and their applications are cited. The value of this work for the study of the Talmud and its literature is inestimable, for the proper understanding of the terms removes many difficulties and sheds light on many an inexplicable passage. It also contributed to a better comprehension of the development of the Halakah. A number of terms are used both by the Tannaim and the Amoraim but the latter often gave them a wider connotation which indicates the continual expansion and ramification of Halakic concepts. The hundreds of notes wherein texts are corrected, parallels cited, and difficult passages in the literature explained, enhance the value of the work.

A third bulky treatise entitled *Tradition und Tradenten* (Tradition and bearers of Tradition) completes the labors of Bacher in this extensive field of Jewish lore. In this book the author undertook to classify all legal and Agadic statements of the Talmudic literature under the names of their pronouncers. Likewise are the earlier collections of Halakah discussed, statements of uncertain origin traced to their sources, and many other problems connected with the transmission of tradition in the various schools clarified. The classification is a detailed one, for not only is each Tanna or Amora given a section where his traditions are recorded, but chapters are devoted to traditions brought by Babylonian scholars to Palestine and vice versa, to transmissions of Halakot by groups of scholars, to anonymous traditions and all other varieties. The book is primarily intended for scholars, and few quotations are given, but instead thousands of references.

Solomon Buber's (b. 1827 d. 1906) contribution to the study of Agada consists primarily in editing hitherto unknown Midrashim from manuscripts in the great libraries. His editions are distinguished by their scientific exactness of the text, which was collated with numerous manuscripts and corrected by parallels from the entire Midrashic literature. They can be said to be a model of such type of works. But of still greater value are his commentaries and introductions. The former display a keen sense of penetration in the content of Midrashim as well as wide philological knowledge of the classical tongues and the Aramaic language. Buber was well equipped for his work, for besides his mastery of the entire field of Jewish lore, especially the Agadic literature, he also possessed an extensive secular education and a critical sense. In addition, he was blessed

with wealth, and he utilized it in obtaining manuscripts and the rarest books necessary for his work.

His first edition was that of the *Pesikta di-Rab Kahana* (1868), the principal book of the *Pesikta* cycle of Midrashim (Vol. I, Sec. 84). This most important Midrash was quoted by all earlier Jewish scholars, and excerpts from it are found in the *Aruk* by Rabbi Nathan and in the Midrashic collection known as the *Yalkut*, and in many other works. It undoubtedly circulated in manuscript during the Middle Ages, but for one reason or another was never printed. Its existence was only known through the quotations. Buber was the first to reveal the book to the world. In his edition he used four manuscripts and collected all excerpts and parallel sayings. The commentary explains the difficult passages, gives the correct form of the Greek and Latin words, which as a rule, are given erroneously in the *Pesikta*, and frequently corrects also numerous passages in other Agadic books which are parallels to those given in the Midrash. The introduction is a highly detailed and scholarly study of this Agadic work. It deals with the name and authorship, its relation to other Midrashim of that cycle, and contains lists of all excerpts of the *Pesikta* found in the works of all Mediaeval writers, whether they are quoted in its name or anonymously.

The second important edition of a Midrash was that of the older *Tanhuma*. Until the appearance of this book, there was a printed *Midrash Tanhuma*. But scholars had recognized from numerous quotations in works of Mediaeval authors, that there must have been another Midrash by that name, for the excerpts were not found in the printed version. Buber succeeded in finding that Midrash and thus enriched Midrashic literature with a valuable book. The work is edited according to nine manuscripts and with the same scrupulous care as the *Pesikta*. It is also provided with a commentary and introduction. The latter which contains 212 pages is a work in itself. It consists of twenty chapters and covers all phases of this particular Midrash as well as of the *Tanhuma* cycle of Midrashim in general. Among the subjects discussed in the introduction are the date and authorship of the book, the character of the Midrashim in the *Tanhuma* cycle, the nature and style of this particular Midrash, the names of the Tannaim and Amoraim mentioned therein as well as all foreign words, the excerpts quoted in other Midrashim and by other Mediaeval writers, and many more phases. The scholarly

world hailed Buber's edition of the *Tanḥuma* with delight and the quotations from it are often cited as found in "*Tanḥuma Buber*."

Besides these Agadic books he also edited the *Pesikṭa Sutrata* (The Smaller Pesikta) or *Midrash Lekah Tob* by Eliezer ben Tubia (Vol. I, Sec. 89) and a number of other Midrashim, among them *Midrash Shohar Tob* (on Psalms), *Midrash Mishlê* (on Proverbs) and a collection of smaller works were provided with commentaries, notes, and introductions. Buber also wrote numerous articles in various learned periodicals dealing with the development and the history of Midrashic literature. Almost all of his works are written in Hebrew.

Another scholar who enriched the Midrashic literature by new editions of numerous smaller works of this type was Adolph Jellinek (1821-1893) the famous preacher and savant of Vienna. He chose for the field of his activity the smaller and Apocryphal Midrashim which are not related to any book of the Bible, but are arranged according to certain devices (Vol. I, Sec. 89). Some of them are merely collections of stories or legends about Biblical heroes or saints. He published in the years 1853, 1857, and 1873-78 six volumes containing about one hundred of such small Midrashim under the general name of *Bet ha-Midrash*. Most of them are edited from manuscripts and some taken from miscellaneous older works. They are provided with comments and brief introductions. A younger scholar, Julius Theodor, who also labored in the field of Midrash, devoted himself to the cycle of the standard large Midrashim called the *Rabbot*. He contributed many essays on their character and composition, and also undertook a critical edition of the *Bereshit Rabba* of which only about a half appeared.

85. ESSAYS AND BIOGRAPHIES

There are numerous other works in the field of Talmudics in both its Halakic and Agadic phases. Thus Rabbi Hirsch Chajes wrote a short introduction to the *Targumim* and Midrashim entitled *Iggeret Bikoret* where he discusses the origin and the dates of the *Targum Onkelos* and those of the principal Midrashim. It also contains a brief characterization of the nature of that *Targum* and the methods used by Onkelos in harmonizing the written with the oral law. A more important work of his on the relation between the written and the oral law is the *Torat Nebîim*, in which he attempts to show the close relation between the two. He discusses the role of

the prophets in the transmission of the oral law, the ordinances ascribed to them, the nature of the Rabbinic precepts, and the Rabbinic authority to enact additional laws and its limitation.

Abraham Krochmal (1820-1895), the son of Nahman Krochmal (Sec. 75), composed a volume of notes and comments on the Babylonian Talmud written from a critical point of view. With great keenness he explains many difficult passages both in the Halakic and Agadic parts, but he is often carried away by his desire to read into the words of the Talmudists some of the modern ideas and views.

A large number of critical essays on Talmudic subjects was written by the friend of Abraham Krochmal, Joshua Heshel Schorr (1812-1895). Schorr represents in his literary activity the spirit of the times which expressed itself in revolt against tradition. He was the East-European counterpart of Abraham Geiger. Like him he strove to reform the Jewish religion. But while the former found an ample field for his activity and became a leader of a movement, the latter was hemmed in by his environment. He lived in Galicia, and his revolt expressed itself entirely in his critical articles on various phases of the Halakah and the Agada. Not being in sympathy with the tendency of the learned Hebrew journals at the time, he organized his own organ which he named *ha-Haluz* (The Vanguard) indicating by it that he is one of the first to wage the battle of progress against a rigid tradition. There he published all his essays. There appeared thirteen volumes of the *ha-Haluz* at irregular intervals, the last one in 1889, and while contributions of other scholars were included in the first few, the last seven contain only the essays of the editor and publisher. It can, therefore, be seen that their number is considerable, and were they collected, they would fill several bulky tomes. The subjects the essays deal with are diverse and cover the entire field of Jewish literature, for Schorr was a many-sided scholar. His forte, however, was Talmudics, and most of his essays are devoted to the criticism of the Talmud and other Halakic works. As mentioned, Schorr was a champion of reforms in the Jewish religion, but he never elaborated a definite principle, according to which the reforms should be carried out. In one of his essays on the subject, he says distinctly that we must not reject the authority of the Talmud and certainly not found any sect or faction in Jewry. In fact, he even criticized severely the resolutions of the Rabbinical Conference in Frankfort in the year 1845. It seems that while he

did not object to a kind of submission to the general authority of the Talmud or the oral law, he opposed its acceptance in any definite form and advocated an extensive latitude for scholars and rabbis in selecting from the oral tradition such elements they deem necessary and reject the rest. For this purpose he endeavored to prove by scholarly research in the history of the Halakah that there never was a tradition fixed for all time, and that the Tannaim and Amoraim allowed themselves to change the decisions of their predecessors. He even attempted to prove that the very text of the Mishnah was changed by later scholars. On account of this tendency, he concentrated his criticism on the Mishnah with intention to undermine its authority. Against all views held by earlier and contemporary scholars, he advanced a theory that Judah the Prince, its redactor, never meant to render legal decisions and that the anonymous statements in it (Setam Mishnah) were given as such merely because the names of their pronouncers were forgotten with no intention to indicate the decision of the law. Furthermore, he even dared to assert that in certain cases, Judah himself misunderstood the words of his predecessors. In his discussions of the comparative value of the Babylonian and Palestinian Talmuds, he favored the latter because he believed it to be permeated by a freer spirit than the former. Schorr wrote numerous notes and comments on difficult passages in both Talmuds and the Midrashim, and while they contain much ingenuity, they are distinguished by a polemic spirit which caused him to offer frequently far-fetched explanations and curious interpretations. A peculiar characteristic of his was to trace numerous Talmudic words, expressions, and even names of Tannaim and Amoraim to the Greek language, and if such derivation did not seem plausible according to the received text, he emended it in accordance with his preconceived notion. The pilpulistic spirit against which Schorr himself fought so valiantly is in great evidence in all his writings.

He also imitated his friend Erter in his visions and satires and composed a number of imaginary dialogues with several Amoraim, wherein these authorities expressed their amazement at the extreme religious severity of the later scholars, and he, likewise, penned several satirical essays against the rabbis of his time. But in all these attempts he fell far below Erter.

Schorr also extended his criticism to the Bible and in many articles, he offered considerable emendations in the texts of a number of

books. These are distinguished by the same qualities and the same defects as his Talmudic comments and emendations.

Judging the work of this erratic scholar as a whole, we can say that while it is vitiated by his negative and polemic tendencies, yet it contains much that is positive and constructive and many of his comments and some emendations help the student to a better understanding of numerous passages in both the Talmud and the Bible. That his essays and articles show great erudition and mastery of the wide field of Jewish learning goes without saying.

Schorr wrote almost all his works in Hebrew, a fact which adds to their value.

We cannot conclude our review of studies in the field of Talmudics without mentioning that much was accomplished in it by the writers of biographies of individual Tannaim and Amoraim, where their lives, their views, and methods of teaching are delineated. The most noted biographies are: of Hillel by S. J. Kämpf (1849); of Joĥanan ben Zakkaï and of Akiba by W. Landau; *Die Vertreter der Akiba'schen Schule* (The Representatives of the School of Akiba, i.e. his disciples) by M. Joel; and *Mar Samuel* (a leading Babylonian Amora of the first generation) by D. Hoffman.

86. HISTORY AND HISTORICAL MONOGRAPHS

Of all the branches of Jewish learning the scholars of the last century labored at, that of history and its ancillary subjects was by far the branch most cultivated by them. The number of works dealing with the various phases of this group of studies runs into the hundreds. We shall limit ourselves to the most noted and outstanding works.

As early as the year 1812, Ignatz Jeitteles of Prague made an attempt to gather material for the writing of a Jewish history by publishing a number of essays on the subject in the various periodicals of the time. He was followed by the poet Solomon Löwisohn (Sec. 23) who, as stated above, planned to write a complete post-Biblical Jewish history, but published in 1820 only the first volume entitled *Vorlesungen über die neue Geschichte der Juden, Band I*. The work bears the ear-marks of a real history for the gifted young author viewed Jewish history, as Graetz expresses it, through the eyes of a poet and lover of his people, and in addition possessed also the power of unifying many details and isolated facts into an har-

monious picture. There were at the time several other attempts at writing Jewish histories, the outstanding of which was the *Toldot Yisrael* (History of the Jews) by Peter Beer (1758-1838) of Prague, in two parts, the first of which appeared also in German. This work, however, was more in the nature of a text-book for students and not a real history.

The first man who undertook the writing of a Jewish history on a large scale was Isaac Marcus Jost (1793-1860), who published in 1820 his *Geschichte der Israeliten* in nine volumes. Jost, who, like Zunz, lost his parents while yet a child and was brought up together with the latter at the Jewish orphanage in Wolfenbüttel, possessed a wide secular education and also a fair knowledge of Jewish lore, but could hardly measure up to the standard set by his friend Zunz or that of any of the younger scholars of the generation. He was, therefore, unequal to the task he had undertaken which was made more difficult by the lack of material necessary for such an enormous work as a complete history of the Jews. At the time Jost began to write his History, the field was still barren; the works of Zunz, Rapoport, Krochmal, and Frankel had not appeared as yet, and little preparatory work had been done. Jost had to rely mainly on the historical works of the Mediaeval Jewish writers and on a few works written by Gentile scholars, especially on the History of Basnage, all of which were inaccurate and incomplete. To accomplish both, to quarry the stones, and to construct the edifice of Jewish history was beyond his powers. Yet it must be admitted that with the scanty material at hand, his History presents a worthy attempt in the field and pointed the way to his successors. That it contains many inaccuracies and still more numerous omissions of historical facts and episodes goes without saying.

These shortcomings, however, are not the gravest defects of the History. There are more serious faults in it. These are the lack of coordination of facts into a unity and the particular point of view of the historian. Jost was, on the whole, a good observer and possessed an objective attitude towards events, but he lacked imagination and penetration into the inner phases of things. He found it, therefore, difficult to discover the connecting link between periods or to reveal the spirit animating historical epochs. He recorded the external events in a more or less systematic manner, but the inner process of Jewish life of the past remained a closed mystery to him.

As a result, the History is more in the nature of a series of monographs than a well-constructed unified work.

A still greater handicap was the point of view of the author. He was a rationalist who strove, along with many others in that generation, for reforms in Jewish life and religion. He had, therefore, little appreciation for Jewish nationalism or for any manifestation of deep religiosity. Like his colleagues of the Reform party, he had an antipathy to Jewish legalism and saw in the complexity of laws and precepts only a hindrance to the manifestation of the pure Jewish spirit striving for the realization of universal ethical ideals. The system of laws and ordinances evolved by the bearers of tradition and embodied in the Talmud and the later Rabbinic literature, he considered only as a necessary means for the preservation of Judaism during periods of oppression, which, in modern times, should be, if not entirely discarded, at least greatly modified. To this must be added his apologetic tendency, his endeavor to prove to the non-Jewish readers that the Jews made an important contribution to human progress by being the first to propagate the monotheistic religion in the world and by their championing the humanistic-ethical ideals, and that the various charges made against them by the non-Jewish world are unjust.

This point of view and tendency impressed themselves upon the History in spite of Jost's repeated assertion of his objectivism. To him, unlike to Graetz, the history of the Jews in exile was not that of a national entity but of a religious community, struggling primarily for the right of maintaining its religious beliefs and the preservation of its ethical ideals. He could not see in the various manifestations of the Jewish spirit, such as in the Halakic and Agadic activities, in the longing for redemption, and in the mystic tendencies, expressions of the national spirit, but considered them primarily as a defense mechanism against a hostile external world and as flights into supernaturalism from the hard realities of a life of suffering.

In his treatment of the Biblical period, however, he restrained somewhat his rationalism and his attitude towards the Bible is, in general, a conservative one. He endeavors to the best of his ability to harmonize the miracles and stories of the Bible with the current Deistic ideas by describing them as of symbolic significance and of a figurative character. His liberalism and rationalism becomes more concrete and more precise in the discussion of the post-Biblical periods. Thus, he brands the Pharisees, the originators of numerous

laws, as the fanatics of a theocracy and praises John Hyrcanus for his rift with that party and commends his attempt to turn a theocratic state into a secular kingdom. The entire activity of the Talmudists and the later rabbis, he declares a product of a barren conservatism which resulted in the isolation of the Jews from the rest of the world. The Kabbala and other mystic currents are stamped as superstitious tendencies and vagaries of dreamers. The philosophic works of the poets, Gabirol and ha-Levi are minimized for their religious note, but that of Maimonides is glorified. The latter typifies to him the pure rational thinker who, by his reasoning, freed the Jewish spirit from the shackles of the casuistic legal system. That such a statement has no foundation in view of the fact that Maimonides was simultaneously the author of the great Code, the *Mishnah Torah*, is quite evident.

Jost's lack of emotion is especially manifested in his narrative of Jewish suffering. He is more of a recorder of events than a participant in the tragedy of his own people, and even on occasions attempts to mitigate the maliciousness of the persecutions.

In the events of that part of the Modern Period of Jewish history covered by his work, Jost saw the beginning of the realization of the ideals of Jewish history. In the activity of Mendelssohn and his followers he saw a definite step towards the elevation of the inner worth of Judaism in addition to being a successful attempt to prepare the Jews for participation in the general life. The incipient Reform movement he views, of course, with sympathy, but does not fail to see its shortcomings. His liberalism and his desire to see his brethren incorporated in the body politic of the nations on an equal footing with the other members are often expressed in a naïve form. He hails with excessive joy every insignificant step in the amelioration of the Jewish situation. Even the bestowing of a few titles of nobility upon several Jews arouses his enthusiasm.

The interest of Jost in Jewish history did not end with the completion of his first work. He continued his studies in that field and twelve years later in 1832, he issued his *Allgemeine Geschichte des israelitischen Volkes* in two volumes, a digest of his larger work but with additional material carrying the narrative up to that year. The shorter History excels his earlier and larger work in method of treatment of the material, in the coordination of data, and to a degree also in the point of view. It proves that the author progressed in his conception of Jewish history and that he profited by the re-

searches in the different branches of Jewish learning made by scholars in the intervening years, which brought to light new data and corrected many erroneous ones.

In 1847 Jost brought forth a new historical work entitled *Die Geschichte der Juden neuerer Zeit* in three volumes. The work, which was intended as a complement to his earlier History, is devoted primarily to the cultural history of the Jews of the Modern Period. This work shows further progress on the part of the author in judging events and persons in a much maturer way than heretofore. Jost was well-fitted to write a history of contemporaneous times, for, due to his unemotional character, he was able to treat the subject with considerable objectivism and was much less swayed by personal bias than Graetz. He maintained, however, his point of view which influenced to a degree his estimate of the value of certain facts and activities. Being a moderate reformer and an ardent liberal, he saw in the Reform movement a salutary means for the improvement of Jewish life, and in the hoped-for emancipation a step towards the realization of the ideals of that life which were, according to him, complete participation of the Jews in the political and social life of the nations on the one hand, and the preservation of their individuality as a distinct religious community on the other hand. Occurrences and persons were viewed therefore, from a pragmatic standpoint, namely how far they furthered the attainment of this desired state of affairs or to what degree they hindered its realization. Jost gathered much material for the cultural history of the Jews of the period, but failed to elaborate it in the proper manner. He treated the cultural development of the Jewries of various countries as separate episodes which bear little relation to one another and did not see the inner connection between the spiritual phenomena which took place in different Jewish centers.

His last work, *die Geschichte des Judenthums und seiner Secten* (1857-1859) in three volumes is by far the best of all his historical productions. Jost, as we have seen, was a good student and he availed himself of the opportunities offered by the works of a generation of scholars for enriching his knowledge. During the thirty-five years that elapsed since he wrote his first work, there appeared the important studies of Zunz, Rapoport, Krochmal, Frankel, Luzatto, and even several volumes of Graetz's history. He utilized all the treasures of learning, corrected his former errors, and even his judgments. He viewed his subject from a wider historical horizon

and a much clearer perspective; his fundamental point of view though remained essentially the same. The book covers the entire spiritual development of Judaism from the beginning of the Second Commonwealth to the middle of the last century with special attention to the rise and development of sects within Jewry. Such an embrative undertaking certainly would have required many tomes, much bulkier than those of Jost, were he to have dealt with the subject in detail and critically. This, however, was not intended, as it is primarily a general survey of all the vicissitudes of Judaism in its long existence. The author set before himself as an aim to give approximate answers to the following questions: In what does the importance of Judaism as a distinct event in world history consist? How should we conceive its essence, how did it develop through the ages, and to what degree was it influenced by the general progress of humanity? What is the destiny of Judaism, and what is its importance as a factor in the history of the development of humanity? Jost did not give a satisfactory answer to any of these questions, but he presented a fair sketch of the numerous phases of the development of Judaism. However, the aim of the author indicates the trend of his view. He always wrote with an eye to the outside world and always had in mind to prove to the non-Jews that Judaism contributed its share to the progress of humanity. This is the very same trait which is much in evidence in his large history. His liberal rationalistic point of view hardly changed. Judaism to him is still identical with the Jewish religion, and he begins its history not with the settlement of the Jews in Canaan but with the destruction of the First Commonwealth for it was then that Judaism was reborn. It was then, in the words of our author, "that out of the smouldering ruins of Jerusalem, there arose a spirit which, freed from the shackles of the state, imparted to its adherents a new life."¹ In other words, it was then that Judaism entered upon its world historical mission. Jost does not consider the Second Commonwealth a real state, inasmuch as religion was the most important factor in Jewish life during the period of its existence.

He is, however, quite aware that this rebirth was not a miraculous event, but that the roots of Judaism lie deep in the previous period and that the prophetic books and utterances already contained the seeds of the new spirit. Yet, as long as the state existed, the spirit

¹ *Geschichte des Judenthums*, Vol. I, p. 1.

was weighed down by political struggles, and only after the destruction of the former could it rise to the heights.

From these statements we see that Jost remained true to the liberal-rationalistic conceptions which considered world Jewry merely a religious community and valued Judaism for its universalistic-ethical content. Yet we note great changes in Jost's understanding of Jewish history and a deeper insight into the inner workings and unfoldings of the Jewish spirit, and these are reflected in his judgments. He is no more the dry rationalist and his opposition to the law is more moderate and much milder. He speaks in this last work of the Pharisees in an entirely different tone than in his History. They are no more the fanatics of a theocracy but the modest and devoted leaders of the masses who are mild in judgment and humanistic in their laws. They recognize the continual power of the law but also its subjection to social manifestations, and they strive to eternal happiness by means of piety.²

Similarly does he view the Kabbala and the mystic current in Judaism in a different light than in his earliest work. It is no more a concoction of superstitious beliefs, but a movement which strives to emphasize the spiritual phase in Judaism by word and deed. Furthermore, it is a natural outgrowth of the exuberant religious thought and emotions permeating the Scriptures and holy writings.³ Such changes in Jost's judgment could be easily multiplied, all of which shows a widening of horizon and deepening of understanding. Yet his opposition to the law crops out on occasions. Thus, he takes Mendelssohn, whom he otherwise admires greatly, to task for his insistence upon the observance of the precepts and his making it binding upon every Jew. Jost considers it an inconsistency on his part and incongruous with his own view of Judaism. The book, on the whole, is more coordinated and more unified than Jost's earlier works, and presents a well-connected account of the development of Judaism in its various phases through a very long period. It was quite popular in its time.

Jost's attempt to produce a history of the Jews on a grand scale found no immediate imitators until the time of Graetz, but numerous works were produced in the field which deal with parts of that history and many of them are of scientific merit and display wide

² Ibid., p. 225.

³ Ibid., Vol. III, p. 65 ff.

erudition and deep research. One of these is J. Salvador's "History of the Roman Rule in Judea and the Destruction of Jerusalem," published in 1847. Salvador, on account of his ignorance of Hebrew literature, drew little upon Jewish sources but utilized extensively the Greek and Latin writings and historical works in modern languages. He consequently hardly touched upon the inner life of the Jews and limited himself to the discussion of the political situation. He contributed much to the clarification of this phase of the history of the period by his keen analysis of Josephus' account of the Jewish wars which pointed out the contradictions of his report. With psychological insight, he uncovered the motives of the Jewish factions and threw light upon the great conflict between the Jews and the Romans. In addition, he also discussed the rise of Christianity and the first stages of its development.

Two other works by noted Jewish scholars deal with the period of the Second Commonwealth. The first is the extensive treatise of L. Herzfeld *Geschichte von der Zerstörung des ersten Tempels bis zur Einsetzung des Mak̄kabaers Simon zum Priester und Fürsten* (History of the Jews from the Destruction of the First Temple to Simon the Maccabee) in three parts. This voluminous work which covers only a short span of time from 586 to 142, about four hundred years, treats the subject in great detail. The author displayed in it not only wide erudition but also great critical acumen and original interpretation of the rather scanty sources. This period, in spite of its great importance for Jewish history as well as for that of Judaism and its institutions, is to a large extent, covered by a veil of darkness. The sources are few and not explicit in their wording. The facts and data have to be elicited from scattered remarks and often from contradictory statements. Herzfeld undertook the work, and with great patience and energy he examined the Books of Chronicles, Ezra and Nehemiah, the few chapters in Josephus's Antiquities bearing on this period, the Books of the Maccabees, the references in Greek histories, and the historical remarks scattered in Talmudic literature, and constructed a real history of the times. He shed light upon the activities of Ezra and Nehemiah, of the *Sopherim*, on the institution of the Great Assembly (Keneset ha-Gedolah), the rise of the oral law, and many ancillary problems. His conclusions were drawn upon by Graetz and others.

The second work is the *Essai sur l'histoire et la géographie de la Palestine* by Joseph Derenbourg. The work won the prize set by the

Academie des Inscriptions for the best essay on the subject and was published at the expense of the French government. It covers the history of the Jews in Palestine from the Restoration by Cyrus to Hadrian, a period close to seven hundred years, i.e. from 539 B.C.E. to 135 C.E. The history is limited mainly to sources found in Talmudic literature and consequently its range is restricted more to the delineation of the inner Jewish life than to the political situation and is more an account of the cultural and spiritual development of the Jewish people during that time than a real history. The point of view of the author, closely resembling that of Jost, is, that the leading motive in Jewish life during that period was of a religious nature rather than a national, and the conflicts of the parties was more a result of differences in opinion rather than of striving for political power. The Pharisees, he says, did not strive for the restoration of the Jewish kingdom but were mainly interested in making the kingdom of God prevail on earth. The political situation was of little concern to them. This view, like that of all others who attempted to minimize the value of the national elements in Jewish life and history is undoubtedly an erroneous one and is not borne out by a deeper insight into Jewish history. He availed himself much of the labors of Herzfeld, Graetz, and Geiger, and followed the last one partly in his views on the differences between the Pharisees and the Sadducees in matters of Halakah. He, however, contributed much of his own towards the solution of many knotty problems in the history of the time by analyzing the passages in the wide Talmudic literature, which contain some references to events in past Jewish life, and extracting from them the grains of true historical data imbedded in a mass of legends.

A historical work of great value which embraces the story of the Jews from the destruction of the Second Commonwealth to the middle of the nineteenth century is the article *Geschichte der Juden* by Selig Cassel in the twenty-eighth volume of the famous Ersch and Gruber encyclopaedia, published in 1853. The article or rather the book, for it occupies two hundred and thirty-eight pages of folio size, is a masterly presentation of the subject. It is divided into three parts. The first deals with the Jews in the Roman Empire; the second with the position of the Jews in Christian Europe; and the third with their situation in Islamic and other non-European countries. Each of the parts is subdivided into sections devoted to the political, social, and cultural phases of Jewish history in the respective

periods and lands. In spite of its comparative brevity, it is not a sketch of Jewish history but a comprehensive account of the multitude of events and episodes which took place during that long span of time and of the various phases of Jewish life during the nineteen centuries covered by it. No important event or manifestation of life is neglected, but special attention is given to the delineation of the political and legal status of the Jews in the lands of their sojourn as well as the influence exerted by the outside world upon them and vice versa. The real value of the work consists in the exploitation of the extensive sources of information. Cassel displays in the article exceptional erudition of both Jewish and secular learning, as his many citations of documents and references, a large part of which were entirely unknown before he uncovered them, prove. The numerous notes contain also many ingenious suggestions which facilitate the solution of historical problems. On account of these traits and characteristics, the survey, though written more than three quarters of a century ago, still possesses value both for the student and the reader.

Much was accomplished in the field of the history of the Jewries of different countries. Numerous historical monographs were written by many scholars, depicting the past life of their brethren in the lands of their sojourn. The most important of these, dealing with Austria and Germany, are: *Die Juden in Oesterreich* by Joseph Wertheimer, the series of historical essays by Gerson Wolf on the history of the Jews in Vienna and other important Austrian cities, M. Werner's *Regesten zur Geschichte in Deutschland*, Julius Aronius' *Quellen zur Geschichte der Juden in Deutschland*, and Otto Stobbe's *Die Juden in Deutschland während des Mittelalters*. In addition there is a host of books and treatises dealing with the history of the Jews of individual Germanic states and cities. In general, it can be said that there is hardly a Jewish community in Germany of any importance which did not find its historian. The history of the Jews in Hungary was treated by Joseph Bergel in his book, *Geschichte der Juden in Ungarn* and by Leopold Löw who wrote *Die neue Geschichte der Juden in Ungarn*. Samuel Cohen wrote a similar history in Hungarian. Many younger scholars devoted themselves to histories of leading Jewish communities in that country.

Great attention was paid by scholars to the history of the Jews in Spain and Portugal. The noted books on the subject are Adolph de Castro's *History of the Jews of Spain*, E. H. Lindo's *History of the*

Jews of Spain and Portugal, and especially the historical works by Moritz Kayserling (1829-1905), *Geschichte der Juden in Spanien und Portugal*, in two volumes, and *Christoph Columbus und der Antheil der Juden in den spanischen und portugiesischen Entdeckungen*. Kayserling is the historian of the Jews of the Pyrenean Peninsula par excellence. He devoted a great part of his life to the exploration of both the Jewish and the non-Jewish sources and utilized many hitherto unknown documents. His History is primarily limited to the political, social, and economic phases of Jewish life in these countries during the period, from the early settlement of the Jews to the expulsion. In the case of Portugal, however, that date is exceeded for the author devotes a large part of the volume to the history of the Marranos and the settlements of the Portuguese Jews in other lands and their subsequent development. The lives of distinguished men of Portuguese descent, whose activity was carried on in other lands, are likewise delineated in a comprehensive manner. A popular sketch of the sufferings of the Jews from the hands of the Inquisition was written by F. D. Mocatta (1878) entitled, "The Jews and the Inquisition." Another English Jewish scholar, Joseph Jacobs (1854-1916), made a valuable contribution to this field in his treatise, "The Sources of Spanish Jewish History," wherein he brought to light numerous documents bearing upon various phases of past Jewish life in the Pyrenean Peninsula. Noteworthy studies in the history of the Jews in Spain were also made by Isadore Loeb (1839-1893), professor of Jewish history in the Rabbinical Seminary at Paris and editor for many years of the *Revue des Etudes Juive*. It is in this journal that he published many historical essays based on the study of original documents.

While there is no complete history of the Jews in France, there are a number of important monographs dealing with the history of the leading Jewish communities. Noteworthy among them are those of Abraham Cahen on the city of Metz and of L. Kahn on the Jews in Paris, both in French. Of special value are the works of H. Gross, *Geschichte der Juden in Arles* and his *Gallia Judaica* (Jewish Gaul i.e. France). The first is a detailed and comprehensive account of the Jews of both the city and the province of Arles from their early settlement to the expulsion in 1394. The province of Arles was for a century, from 1150 to 1251, a republic and the Jews played an important role in the destinies of that little state and exerted great influence upon the neighboring cities of the Provence.

The author, therefore, covers also partly the history of the Jews in the leading communities of Southern France. The second is a kind of historical encyclopaedia in which the articles arranged in alphabetic order sketch the history of the Jews in all cities and towns of France wherever they happened to reside. The author thus presents a history of the Jews in all cities and towns of France though not in the form of a connected narrative. He displays great erudition in the work and a keen historical sense in sifting his extensive material which he collected from hundreds of sources, extracting from that mass the true facts and accurate data.

Several Italian Jewish scholars devoted themselves to the study of the history of their brethren in that country and wrote monographs describing the development of Jewish life in important communities, of which Abraham Pesaro's study of the Jews in Ferrara is the best. The history of the Jews in Rome engaged the attention of a number of German Jewish scholars and we have two books on the subject by Abraham Berliner, *Geschichte der Juden in Rom* and *Juden in Rom* by Paul Rieger and H. Vogelstein. The first is a survey of the past life of the Jews in that world capital from early times to the end of the nineteenth century and the second a more comprehensive study of the subject. It consists of two volumes, the first of which is devoted to the history of the Jewish community in Rome from 139 B.C. to 1420 C.E. and the second to that of the subsequent period up to 1870. In this history, the authors describe in detail not only the political, social and economic vicissitudes of the Jews in Rome during a period of two millennia, but pay also much attention to the cultural and literary phases. Of special interest is the chapter dealing with the Jewish contribution to Greek and Latin literature during the early times of pagan Rome. We learn that as early as 30 B.C.E., the Jews produced several writers and poets who were greatly esteemed by the literati of the generations. The most important of them was Caecilius of Calacte in Sicily. He was a leading rhetorician and is credited both by Plutarch and Quintilian with the revival of Greek rhetorical and literary art. He wrote many works, among them "On the Style of Ten Orators" and a lexicon of Greek phrases, both of which are referred to by Plutarch and others as authoritative.

The great Jewish centers of Eastern Europe, Poland and Russia, did not find during the last century their right historians. The field, however, was not neglected, and a number of East-European

scholars made notable contributions to a future construction of that history by gathering the material for this work, as well as producing a number of general sketches of Polish-Jewish history and monographs on several leading Jewish communities. Material for Polish-Russian Jewish history was prepared by the following: A. Harkavy in his *ha-Yehudim u-Sefat ha-Slavim* (The Jews and the Slavonic Language) where, in addition to discussing the question to what extent the Slavonic languages were employed by the Russian Jews as a medium of expression, he throws much light on the history of the Jews in Southern Russia in early times. Hayyim Jonah Gurland published a series of documents later collected in book form under the name of *le-Korot ha-Gezerot be-Yisrael* bearing on the history of the Cossack persecution of the Jews of the Ukraine during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Menaḥem Litinsky, Naḥum Sokolow, P. Wettstein, and others also contributed a number of essays published in Hebrew periodicals of the time which elucidate the history of the Jews in Poland in the above-mentioned centuries. Elias Orshansky (1846-1875), a gifted young Russian Jewish writer and scholar, presents in his book, "The Russian Legislation Concerning the Jews," a complete analysis of the political situation of the Jews in that empire from the time of Catherine II to Alexander II. A similar work, "The Polish Legislation Concerning the Jews," was written in Polish by Ludwig Gumpelowicz. Complete sketches of Polish-Jewish history but defective from a scientific point of view were given by Lubliner in *Les Juifs en Pologne* and by L. Hollandersky in *Les Israelites en Pologne*, published in 1839 and 1846 respectively. Both writers were Polish-Jewish revolutionaries who fled their native country and settled in Paris. These were followed by Sternberg's *Geschichte der Juden in Polen*, a more comprehensive but far from a real history, as the writing of history was to the author, who was engaged in commerce, more of an avocation than a real pursuit in life.

Of a much higher value than the Polish Jewish histories are the monographs on Jewish communities. Noteworthy among them are H. Nussbaum's *Geschichte der Juden in Warschau*; Joseph Perles' *Geschichte der Juden in Posen*; Hayyim N. Dembitzer's *Klilat Yofi*, a history of the rabbis of Lemberg from early times to the middle of the nineteenth century; I. M. Zunz's *'Ir ha-Zedek*, a history of the rabbis of Cracow from the sixteenth to the end of the eighteenth century; and S. J. Fün̄n's *Kiryah Neamanah*, the history of the Jews

of Wilna. All these communities played an important role in the life of the Jews of Poland and Lithuania and their histories practically constitute the greater part of the history of the Jewries of those countries.

The first two monographs deal primarily with the vicissitudes of Jewish life in the respective communities and only touch indirectly upon events in the neighboring cities. Perles' work, however, has great historical value, inasmuch as the author, a noted Jewish scholar, brought to light numerous documents both Jewish and non-Jewish which bear on a number of events in Polish-Jewish history in general. Dembitzer's treatise, though devoted mainly to the history of the Lemberg Rabbinate during the centuries, includes also two other important studies bearing upon the intellectual and social life of entire Polish Jewry. These are an account of the leading rabbis and scholars of Poland and Lithuania from 1493 to 1693 and a lengthy essay on the activities and functions of the Council of Four Lands.⁴ Dembitzer, who was a rabbi and a scholar of note, explored the entire Rabbinic literature of the period and extracted all the necessary data for his purpose, and thus produced an authoritative work on the subject. Zunz's *'Ir ha-Zedek* contains much material and treats of the Cracow Rabbinate in detail but is not entirely accurate. It called forth a severe criticism on the part of Joel Dembitzer, a teacher of the same city, who wrote his *Mapalat 'Ir ha-Zedek* (The Downfall of the city of Righteousness), pointing out the errors of Zunz and offering many corrections of his data.

The *Kiryah Neamanah* is an exceptionally valuable contribution to the history of the Jews of Lithuania. It is divided into two parts. The first deals with the history of the city of Wilna and its Jewish community from its foundation in 1382 to 1825, the end of the reign of the Czar Alexander I. It concerns itself with the political history of the Jews in Lithuania in general and of Wilna in particular. The second part is devoted to the rabbis and the scholars of the city from the beginning of the seventeenth century to the end of the first half of the nineteenth. Special attention is given to the delineation of the life, works, and activities of Elijah of Wilna (Sec. 11), known as the Gaon, as well as of the lives and works of his leading disciples. The book contains also much bibliographical material in the field of Rabbinic literature and numerous epitaphs from the

⁴ On the Nature of these Councils, see p. 19, note 1.

tombstones of the rabbis. An appendix containing correction of data and additional historical information by Matitiah Strashun completes the work.

The history of the Jews in England began to engage the attention of Jewish scholars towards the end of the last century, especially of those who resided in that country. A number of books and essays on that subject were written by them, of which the following deserve to be noted. The first in importance is Joseph Jacobs' work, "The Jews of Angevin England," covering particularly the history of the Jews from the accession of Henry II in 1154 to 1206—the reigning dynasty at the time was called Angevin, as its founder was Henry of Anjou—it also contains a survey of the preceding period, from the Norman conquest in 1060 to 1154. The work is not a connected narrative but presents a series of excerpts chiefly from English and Latin official records bearing on events which relate both to individual Jews and to communities. The task the author set for himself is performed in as complete a manner as possible as he says in the preface, "I have included every scrap of evidence I could find in the English records, whether printed or edited, that relates to the Jews of England up to the year 1206." He examined all available official sources, rolls of taxes, deeds and mortgages, as well as archives of monasteries and universities, and thus gathered his data. He, of course, drew upon the work of the chroniclers of the time and also utilized to a great extent Jewish sources. As a result he succeeded in portraying Jewish life in England during that half century in all its phases, political, social, commercial, and intellectual. The author chose this particular epoch in Jewish English history, as it is, in his opinion, the most important era, for prior to the conquest there were no Jews in England, and even after that date, only few settled there during the reign of the first Norman kings. It was only during the reign of the Angevin kings that their numbers increased and they played a great role in English life. The numerous records testify to that. It is his view that the English court of justice known as the Star Chamber derived its name from the fact that it met in a room reserved for legal documents connected with the Jews called in Hebrew, *Shtar*, i.e., bonds or notes. These fifty years before the expulsion in 1289 were the heyday of the Jews in England, for from 1200 their influence declined and the records of their activity become scarcer. The author, moved by patriotic pride, claims that

many famous Jewish sages of the twelfth century had at one time or another resided in England, but his assertions on that matter were subsequently not substantiated.

Jacobs also collaborated with Lucien Wolf in compiling a bibliography of Jewish English history. M. D. Davis, another English-Jewish scholar, wrote a treatise on *Shtorot* (Bonds), dealing with some phases of Jewish economic life before the expulsion. Sketches of Jewish English history were written by James Peixotto and S. Goldschmidt, the latter writing in German. Much material for Jewish history in that country was also published in the annuals of the Anglo-Jewish Historical Society by a number of scholars, among them Charles Gross, Herman Adler, Lucien Wolf, and Lionel B. Abrahams.

87. CULTURAL HISTORY (*Moses Güdemann and Abraham Berliner*)

The historical books hitherto considered deal mainly with the political and religious aspects of Jewish history and touch only indirectly upon the cultural phase of Jewish life. The inner conditions of Jewish life are, on the whole, imperfectly described and only briefly sketched. Several scholars had, therefore, undertaken to remedy this defect in Jewish historiography and produced several works on the subject, the most comprehensive of which is Moses Güdemann's *Geschichte des jüdischen Erziehungswesens und der Kultur der abendländischen Juden während des Mittelalters und der neuern Zeit* (The History of Jewish Education and the Culture of the Jews of Western Europe during the Middle Ages and Modern Times), in four volumes. Güdemann (1835–1918), who was chief rabbi of the Jewish community in Vienna and one of the leading Jewish scholars in the last century, was well-equipped for his task, as he was at home in the entire Jewish literature and possessed a keen critical sense which enabled him to discern between the relevant and irrelevant and extract the necessary data from a mass of extraneous matter. He also mastered the general Mediaeval literature in all its branches and utilized it to its fullest extent.

Besides aiming to portray the inner life of the Jews of Western Europe during the Middle Ages, Güdemann had also another purpose in mind, and that was to determine the influence which the two worlds, the Jewish and the general, exerted upon one another.

He says in his introduction that it is erroneous to assume that the emancipation which brought the Jew into close relation with general life and culture created a complete change in Jewish life and that no contact had existed in the Mediaeval period between the ghetto and the surrounding world. This contact was always in existence and throughout the entire period there was a constant interchange of ideas and cultural values between the Jews and the nations among whom they resided. Not only in Arabic Spain where the Jews contributed much to the general culture, but even in Germany and France where the two groups were separated by numerous laws, modes of life, persecutions, and the hatred of the Church, there were always spiritual and cultural threads which bound them to one another. With all the hatred the Christian bore the Jew he could not look down upon him with contempt and ignore his existence. The very bitter persecutions bear testimony to the secret esteem of the Jew by the Gentile. The Jew therefore could not but exert influence upon his persecutors, and a thorough investigation, says the author, of the inner life of the Mediaeval Jews in all its phases, that of the family, the economic, educational, social, and ethical will reveal to us the numerous ties which bound the two apparently distant worlds together and the many lines of influence which radiated from one to the other. This, he concludes, is one of the principal objects of the treatise.

Three volumes of the work are devoted to the cultural history of the Jews of France, Germany, and Italy from the eleventh century to the end of the sixteenth in the following arrangement. The first deals with the life of the Jews of Germany and France up to the end of the thirteenth century; the second with Italy during the same period; while the third surveys the Jewish cultural state in the three lands during the remaining three centuries. The fourth volume is a collection of documents and long excerpts culled from the entire Mediaeval Rabbinic literature serving as illustrations of the theories and views stated by the author in the three volumes. The documents and the excerpts touch upon every phase of Jewish life, but especially on the state of education, ethical training, and the study of the Torah. They are extracted from different sources, commentaries on the Bible and Talmud, codes, Responsa, communal records (Pinkasim), wills and testaments of sages, and kindred works. It is a bulky volume and was published under the title of *Quellen-*

geschichte des Unterrichts und Erziehung bei den deutschen Juden
(Sourcebook of the History of Instruction and Education of the German Jews.)

In his main work, the author carries out the task he set before himself, namely to depict the life of these three important Jewries of the West faithfully. He cannot, of course, ignore entirely the political situation, and certainly not the literary productivity of the scholars and consequently devotes some space to their delineation, but he does not swerve from his purpose of portraying the pulsating life of the ghetto in its multifarious manifestations. With a master hand, he draws before us in the nine chapters of the first volume—three are devoted to the Jews of Northern France and six to Germany—picture after picture of that life. We are introduced to their method of study of the Bible and the Talmud, to the forms of education of the children, the practice of piety, the conduct of the academies, the life in the family circle, the education of Jewish women, their love of Torah, and their idealism. We further learn of their occupations which consisted, not from choice, primarily of petty commerce and money-lending, of their amusements, their superstitions, mysticism, and ethical ideals. All these portraits of Jewish life are drawn upon a wide canvas of the general life which is placed as a background. For every delineation of a section of Jewish life, there is a cross-section of the outside world of which the Jewish was a part and by comparison we see the superiority of the former over the latter. We are at times astonished and can hardly conceive how it was possible for the Jew to preserve the purity of the family life in its pristine tradition and high ethical ideals in a world of barbarism where might ruled, and lewdness and laxity of morals were prevalent. We are still more astonished at the humanitarian sentiments pervading the teachings of the rabbis as expressed in their ethical writings, where the Jews were admonished to treat their Christian servants with love and gentleness and to deal justly with their neighbors at a time when the literatures of the nations breathed with hatred, and persecutions and massacres were the order of the day. The author traces by these comparisons and parallelisms the mutual relations between the two worlds and the influence they exerted upon one another. We see that in the second half of the twelfth century when great activity was displayed by the Jews in Northern France in the study and commentation of the Bible that a similar movement arose among the Christians of that country which

ultimately resulted in the rise of the heretical factions in the Church, such as that of the Albigenses and the sect known as "the Poor of Lyons." He further shows the spiritual proximity between the mystic movements among the Jews and among the Christians at the beginning of the thirteenth century by citing parallels on the methods of interpretation of the Bible and the use of symbols and allegories both by Jewish rabbis and Christian divines. And while we cannot conclude that the mysticism of Judah ha-Hassid and Eleazar of Worms (Vol. I, Sec. 176; Vol. II, Sec. 105) and that of the Church held important teachings in common, there is no doubt that indirectly the two affected each other to a certain degree. There is much greater similarity between the currents of superstitious beliefs and practices among the Jews and the Christians of the time. The age was one of credulity, and the Jewish masses were easily influenced in such matters by their neighbors. The author shows that much of Mediaeval Jewish superstition which found its way into literature is to be traced to Christian sources.

The second volume is devoted by the author entirely to the Jews of Italy. He delineates in great detail the life of the Jews of that country in its numerous aspects. The same methods are followed, phase after phase is described, and comparisons with the general life are given. On the whole, a brighter picture of Jewish life is disclosed before us. The Jews of Italy were not as persecuted and as harassed as their brethren in France and Germany. Italy preserved throughout the Middle Ages a part of the free spirit of the ancient world and the treatment of the Jews was more lenient than in Germany or France. They were not as hemmed in in their occupations and the masses were not as saturated with hatred towards the Jews as in the former countries. The interchange of ideas between the two groups was greater and more extensive, and the influence of the environment upon the Jews is reflected in the phases of life portrayed in the book. Liberalism was prevalent and philosophy and poetry flourished among them. The external influence was especially reflected in the cheerful attitude towards life, at times even a light-minded one, as expressed in the family life, in the amusements, and in the social relations. The Jews of Italy cultivated the art of music, and singing and dancing were ordinary features at all gatherings and even the rabbis acquiesced in such conduct. Likewise were card playing and other games of chance widely spread in Jewish circles. Jewish women loved to dress well and the passion

for luxury was strong among them. In order to afford the proper setting for this picture, the author directs our attention to conditions in the general life where laxity of morals was rampant among all classes of society, even among the priests and monks; pleasure was the goal pursued by men and women alike, and all restraint was thrown to the winds. It is no wonder then that the Jews were affected to a degree in their conduct of life by the trend in their environment. But this influence was limited only to minor things, and in no wise did the perverse manners and evil ways of Italian life, cited by Güdemann, penetrate through the walls of the ghetto. One of the stories in the *Decameron* serves him as a corroboration of his view. In that story, the purpose of which is to epitomize the degraded moral state of the city of Rome, Boccaccio causes the Jew, Abraham, the subject of the narrative, to express his amazement at the fact that the heavens do not tremble and the earth does not quake at all the sin and iniquity committed in that city. By having the Jew pronounce judgment upon Rome, Boccaccio thus pays tribute to the superiority of Jewish life and its exaltedness as compared with that of the outside world.

The last chapter of the second volume deals with the history of the Jews in Sicily. Here the author gives a complete sketch of that history, both its political and cultural aspects. The story of the Jews in that corner of Europe was greatly neglected by Jewish historians. Zunz was the only one who paid attention to it, but his survey of the position of the Jews in that island was rather brief; Güdemann's narrative is much fuller and detailed. One event deserves to be noted, and this is the proposed establishment of a Jewish university in Sicily. The author tells us that in 1466, King John II issued a charter to the Jewish community of the island whereby he empowered them to establish a regular university in one of the cities they may choose and granted it the right to confer degrees in law, medicine, and other sciences, as well as all other privileges appertaining to a higher institution of learning. The plan was not realized probably because of the interference of the Church. The attempt, however, proves both the cultural state of the Jews of Sicily and the liberality of the king. We also learn that the plans proposed during our own time for the establishment of the Jewish university in one of the European countries or in the United States had a precedent in the fifteenth century. Verily, there is nothing new under the sun.

In the third volume the author continues to describe the inner Jewish life in the three countries during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, not neglecting even minor phases of that life, such as the kind of food and the courses served by the Jews, as well as their dress and costumes. The spiritual and intellectual aspects are treated at great length; and special interest is displayed by the author in the life of the Yeshibah students which is drawn very vividly and in detail, telling of their wanderings from academy to academy, their sufferings, their amusements, and their all-embracing love for Torah. Much space is also devoted to the influence exerted by the Jews upon particular trends in the general life, especially upon the humanistic movement in the sixteenth century. Thus, the three volumes of this great work present to us a comprehensive view of the life of the Jews of Western Europe, during half a millennium, which arouses both our admiration and deep interest by its changing colors and hues and by its lights and shadows.

Judging the work as a whole, we can say that it is distinguished both by wealth of material and by its systematic arrangement and coordination of the multitude of facts into one great edifice of Jewish cultural history. Güdemann was one of the few Jewish historians of the Middle Ages who, in search of facts and data relating to Jewish life and history, explored not only official documents and state papers, but also the poetic and belletristic literature of the nations of Western Europe in addition to polemics, sermons, and theological treatises. From this heterogeneous mass of literary productions, he extracted the events and episodes and statements which threw light on his subject and incorporated them in his work. That he did not leave a corner or a nook in Rabbinic literature without exploring it, is superfluous to say.

Güdemann wrote a similar treatise entitled *Das jüdische Unterrichtswesen während der spanisch-arabischen Periode* (The Substance of Jewish Education during the Spanish-Arabic Period). The book deals with the history of Jewish education and intellectual pursuits of the Spanish Jews up to the end of the thirteenth century. It includes also a survey of the state of learning and the study of the sciences among the Jews of Southern France or the Provence. The phases of Jewish life in these two countries to which the treatise is limited are treated with the same thoroughness as in the previous work, though not in such a detailed manner as parts of the subject were already discussed by other scholars.

Another work which deals with the same subject is Abraham Berliner's *Das innere Leben der deutschen Juden*. It is, as its name indicates, limited to the cultural history of the German Jews only and is not as comprehensive in its treatment as Güdemann's work. But it contains much material and on the whole presents a fair picture of the life of Mediaeval German Jewry. As it was published earlier than the work of Güdemann, it was used by him as one of his sources. In addition to these two works, there were written many essays by various scholars which elucidate one or more aspects of the cultural history of the various Jewries of the world.

88. KARAITE HISTORY AND LITERATURE (*Simḥah Pinsker*)

With the rise of interest in the study of the Jewish past, some of the historians chose for the field of their activity a special branch of that all-embracing subject, and that is the history of the Jewish sects, and especially of the most important one, the Karaites. The most noteworthy work on the history of Karaism is the *Likkutē Kadmoniyot* (Selections from the Writings of the Ancients) by Simḥah Pinsker (Sec. 82), published in 1860. Pinsker was not the first to deal with the history of the Karaites; Geiger, Munk, and others had previously made important contributions to this branch of Jewish learning, but these were more of a fragmentary nature. It was Pinsker who first published a comprehensive work on the *Karaim* and their literature. Living in Odessa, which had at the time a large Karaite community and is close to the Crimea, a center of the Karaites, he was for over twenty years in close association with the scholars of the sect and through their help he was enabled to gather many manuscripts and printed editions of the works of almost all the important Karaite savants and writers. He was aided in his work by one of the leading scholars of the sect, Abraham ben Simḥah Firkovich (1786-1874) who gathered during his travels in the Oriental countries a valuable collection of Karaite books, printed and in manuscript, which he placed at the disposal of his friend. The result of his twenty years of assiduous study of the subject, Pinsker embodied in his work.

The book does not deal with the political history of the Karaites or with the economic and social phases of their communities, but is primarily devoted to the spiritual and literary activity of their leaders throughout the ages. It can, therefore, be said to be more

of a history of Karaism and its literature than a history of the Karaites. The work opens with a discussion on the origin of the Karaites wherein Pinsker propounds an interesting theory of their rise. According to him, there were still living at that time—the eighth century—in Babylonia, remnants of the Sadducean faction which existed during the period of the Second Commonwealth who secretly clung to their ancient views. In addition, there were other groups who were opposed to Rabbinic Judaism. Anan (Vol. I, Sec. 183), the reputed founder of the sect, merely became the central figure around which these groups gathered and brought out their secret opposition into the open. In fact, continues Pinsker, Anan did not even consolidate the opinions and views of the groups into a unified system, but differences continued to exist, and for a time the adherents of Anan, who still followed Tannaitic Judaism to a great extent, were called Ananites in distinction from other groups who were called Karaites and who were more radical in their opposition to the Talmud. These differences continued for over a hundred years until there finally emerged a united sect. This discussion is followed by the body of the book which consists of a series of biographies of Karaite savants in chronological order and long excerpts from their writings.

The value of the book lies primarily in the excerpts which are drawn from all branches of Karaite literature, such as exegesis, poetry, lexicography, law, polemics, and philosophy. Pinsker thus threw open the portals of an entire literature to Jewish scholars; men who hitherto were only known by name now rose to their full spiritual height through the publication of their works. The contributions of generations of Karaite savants to the science of Hebrew language, poetic literature, and to Jewish thought were now made available to students, and much light was shed on the polemics as well as on the relation between the champions of the sect and the Rabbanites or Rabbinic Jews.

The excerpts are accompanied by lengthy notes which contain discussions on historical and literary subjects. The book is supplemented by a series of appendices (*Nispohim*), where additional excerpts are given and some include complete small works. These are also furnished with a series of comments by the author, some of which are essays in miniature, on a diversity of subjects. Pinsker thus opened a wide path in a new branch of Jewish learning which was soon followed by many.

The book, however, with all the light it sheds upon a large part of Jewish literature, has some defects. Pinsker, with the enthusiasm of a pioneer and influenced by his friend, Firkovich, who doctored many documents in favor of his sect, claimed too much for the Karaites. Like Firkovich, he championed the priority of the Karaite savants to those of the Rabbanites in the mastery of the knowledge of the Bible and the science of the Hebrew language, and thus made the Rabbinic scholars borrowers of learning. He antedated a Karaite poet, Moses Darai (Vol. II, Sec. 121), several centuries and concluded that he served as a model to ha-Levi and Ibn Ezra while in reality the case was the reverse. He also turned the grammarian, Judah Ibn Koreish, and the philosopher, David Al-Mukammas, into Karaites and committed many more such errors which were corrected by subsequent students in the field. These inaccuracies, however, do not impair the value of the great work which is lasting and permanent both on account of the material it contains and the many keen and correct views and opinions of the author.

The work of Pinsker gave a great impetus to interest and research in the history of Judaism. His overestimation of the labors of the Karaite savants in certain literary fields, his antedating the poet, Moses Darai, and similar incorrect assertions called forth a feverish activity on the part of other Jewish scholars to test his theses. The result was many essays on various phases of Karaite literature and a number of larger works dealing with the subject. Geiger and Adolph Neubauer were the first to publish essays in various periodicals where they called attention to Pinsker's statements and corrected his conclusions, and they were followed by many others.

Of the larger works on the subject deserving of mention are those of Fürst, Gottlober, Adolph Neubauer, and Abraham Firkovich. The first, published in the years 1862-69, is a three volume book, *Geschichte des Karaërthums* (History of Karaism). The work, though comprehensive, is uncritical and full of gross errors and inaccuracies. He followed in the main Pinsker's conclusions and added a multitude of errors of his own. Yet, he was the first to tell the complete story of the literary activity of the Karaite scholars in all times and places. Such service to learning should not be minimized even when it is defective.

The work of the second, the *Bikoret le-Toldot ha-Karaim* (Critical History of Karaites) is not as voluminous as the other, but as its name indicates, of a more critical nature. It contains an extensive

survey of the history of the sect from the day of its origin to the middle of the nineteenth century and a series of biographical sketches of its leading scholars and writers through the ages, delineating their literary activity. Gottlob deviates from some of Pinsker's conclusions but follows him in many more.

Adolph Neubauer's *Aus der Petersburger Bibliothek, Beiträge zur Geschichte des Karäerthums und der karäischen Literatur* (From the Library of Petersburg, A Contribution to the history of Karaism and its Literature) contains, besides a number of documents and several small works of the savants of the sect hitherto unpublished, also a valuable though a succinct survey of Karaite literature. The author traces the development of this literature in its three important centers, the Oriental countries, the Byzantine Empire, the Crimea and Lithuania, and, besides correcting many of Pinsker's data, adds new material on the literature of the Crimean-Lithuanian center. The works and documents published from manuscripts contribute towards a clearer conception of the tenets of the Karaites.

Firkovich, the only outstanding Karaite scholar in the last century, created quite a stir in his time in literary circles. He contributed much to our knowledge of Karaism by his collection of valuable manuscripts, but he also misled many scholars by his forgeries. Being zealous for the honor and glory of his people, he did not hesitate to doctor documents in order to prove the antiquity of the Karaite schism. In his *Abnē Zikkaron*, a collection of epitaphs from tombstones in old cemeteries in the Crimea, he endeavored to prove that the exiles of the ten tribes settled in that peninsula some time after the fall of Samaria, and that they then followed the Karaite type of Judaism, from which it would follow that Karaism did not originate with Anan in 755 C.E., but represents the original form of Judaism. He also changed dates in the documents for the purpose of making them appear older, deducing from such facts the early interest of the Karaites in the Biblical and philosophical studies. For a time his forgeries and doctoring of dates went unnoticed and a number of Jewish scholars accepted his theories. But soon there arose suspicions and several scholars uncovered these forgeries thus making important contributions to the subject.

The leading critics of Firkovich were Pincus Frankel, David Kahana and later Ephraim Deinard. The former in his work, *Aḥar Ibn Reshef le-Baḳer* (Criticism of Reshef, initials of ben Simhah Firkovich, pseudonym of the scholar) published originally in the

Hebrew periodical *ha-Shahar*, destroyed mercilessly the theories of the Karaite scholar and rewrote whole chapters in the history of Karaism. Frankel also wrote many other essays on various phases of that literature. Kahana's *Ma'asé Ibn Reshef* (The Deeds of Ibn Reshef) similarly contains a scathing criticism of Firkovich. Deinard's *Mas'a Krim* (The Burden of Crimea), published in 1878, wherein he launches a destructive criticism against Firkovich's theories of both the antiquity of the Karaite sect and their very early settlement in the peninsula, contains also a brief history of the Rabbanite Jews of that country who were known as *Krimtshaki*, i.e., Crimean Jews and a description of their life. The book is logically divided into three parts, the first of which is devoted to a detailed scrutiny of Firkovich's theories, his history of the Crimean Karaites, and the numerous forged documents. The second gives a history of the *Krimtshaki* and describes their life, customs, social organization, and some of the historical documents in their possession, while the third gives a number of criteria by means of which the forgeries of Firkovich are to be tested and their falsity determined. These are supplemented by copies of the text of the epitaphs which the Karaite savant was supposed to have unearthed in various places in the Crimea and which bore a very ancient date. However, by applying these criteria, these dates proved to be doctored by the finder of the inscriptions.

Deinard's conclusions are, on the whole, plausible with the exception of several which bear a polemic character. Thus, he asserts, that the Crimean Karaites are in the main the descendants of the Khazars and consequently of Mongolian origin, and further that the Karaites borrowed many of their teachings and ceremonies from Islam. While there may be a modicum of truth in the first assertion, the second displays lack of fundamental knowledge of the character of the religion of the sect.

Of special value are the chapters devoted to the refutation of Firkovich's theory that the *Krimtshaki* were originally Karaites, and only later converted to Rabbanism by three propagandists sent to Crimea from Jerusalem. Deinard proves the preposterousness of such a view, for the Rabbanites had never sent missionaries; he claims, on the contrary, that the Rabbanite Jews were the earlier settlers in the peninsula and that the Karaites came there later. His assumption, however, that the Karaites settled in the Crimea only in the middle of the thirteenth century is wrong, for Petaḥia of

Regensburg (Vol. I, Sec. 196), who visited the place about 1175, speaks of the large number of Karaites he found there. Others who polemized against the savant were Chvolson, Harkavy, and Gurland.

89. HISTORY OF LITERATURE (*Isaac Hirsch Weiss*)

Since literary activity formed the most important phase of past Jewish life, it followed, of course, that the study of its development should have engaged the attention of Jewish savants to an intense degree. As a result, we have numerous books and many more essays dealing with the various branches of that subject. However, great as the interest of the scholars was in this branch of learning, the number of comprehensive works on Jewish literature is comparatively small. There is a multitude of studies dealing with particular sections and even with individual episodes of this vast subject in quite minute detail, but few of the learned ventured to undertake to present a comprehensive view of this extensive literature as a whole or even of a large part of it. One of these daring spirits was Isaac Hirsch Weiss (1815-1905) who in his work, *Dor Dor we-Dorshow* (literally, Each Generation and Its Scholars or Interpreters) presented a history of Jewish tradition as expressed in the vast Talmudic and Rabbinic literatures from earliest times to the end of the fifteenth century or the expulsion of the Jews from Spain, covering a period of three thousand years.

Weiss was born, educated, and spent a considerable part of his life in Moravia, one of the few border countries between Eastern and Western Europe where the conflict between the older type of Jewish life and modern culture was at a minimum. The Jews of that country retained for a large part of the nineteenth century their reverence for Talmudic learning without at the same time spurning secular learning or minimizing the value of the study of the Bible and the mastery of the Hebrew language. It was only such a Jewish center that could produce a historian of Jewish tradition who was completely equipped with the deep knowledge of Talmudic and Rabbinic literature and at the same time possessed sufficient secular knowledge and a keen sense of both criticism and systematization, qualities necessary for a task of this magnitude. His education, though primarily a Talmudic one, was broad enough to embrace an intense study of the Bible and Hebrew and a mastery of several European languages which enabled him to utilize their respective literatures on the subjects he chose to pursue with great ad

vantage, though he never attended a gymnasium or a university.

Until the age of thirteen, he was instructed in the Heder and lower Talmudic academies in his native city, Meseritsch. In these schools, the main subject of study was the Talmud, but hours were also set aside for the study of the Bible in the German translation of Mendelssohn and the Hebrew language and grammar. He then went to Trebitsch, a larger city in Moravia, where Rabbi Hayyim Joseph Pollak conducted an academy, and spent two years there. It was Rabbi Pollak who influenced the young student to disregard the pilpulistic method of the study of the Talmud and adopt instead the critical-historical. He also instilled in him the love for the Hebrew language, and according to Weiss' own testimony, he was asked by his teacher to prepare every week three Hebrew compositions in prose or verse and read them to him. It was these regular exercises in composition which helped him to acquire his concise and clear Hebrew style in which he wrote all his works. At the age of fifteen, he went to Eisenstadt, Hungary, where he continued to pursue the study of the Talmud in the Yeshibah under Rabbi Perles, and thence he proceeded to Nikolsburg, Moravia, to attend the academy of Rabbi Naḥum Trebitsch, a leading Talmudist of the day, ultimately returning to his native town.

During his years of wandering, he found sufficient time to pursue also secular studies and at one time was about to enter a university, but he did not carry out his purpose because of ill-health. For a number of years, Weiss studied privately in his parents' home and made great progress both in Talmudic and historical learning. It was these years which were fruitful in intellectual development for he read the works of Zunz, Rapoport, and Krochmal, and under their influence, he gradually changed his own views.

In 1842 Weiss married the daughter of Baer Oppenheim, district rabbi of Eibesbüttel, and though he was a great Talmudic scholar, well known in the Rabbinic world and the son-in-law of a famous rabbi, he did not enter the Rabbinate but engaged in business. However, being more inclined to scholarship than to commercial pursuits, he did not succeed in his undertakings and after a number of years of struggle, he went in 1858 to Vienna in search of a suitable occupation. He was soon engaged as proof-reader in a large Hebrew printing-house, and after three years, he was appointed by Adolph Jellinek, chief rabbi of Vienna, as lecturer in the *Bet ha-Midrash*, a higher school for Jewish learning, which he founded. This position

he held for forty-odd years, and it is during these years that he produced his scholarly works.

Like many scholars of the day of his type, Weiss made his literary debut with several Hebrew poems which he published in the periodical *Kokbē Yizhak*. He soon devoted himself to more serious pursuits, publishing in 1861 a compendium of synagogue ritual which was included in a new edition of the prayer book. This was followed by a series of works of a high scholarly nature, among them the editions of Tannaitic Midrashim mentioned above (Sec. 83), studies in the language of the Mishnah entitled *Mishpat Leshon ha-Mishnah*, a number of biographies of great men, numerous essays on various Talmudic subjects, and finally his magnum opus, the History of Tradition.

The work is divided into five parts, the first three of which are devoted to the development of tradition and its literature from early Biblical times to the close of the Talmud, and the last two to Rabbinic literature from that date to the expulsion of the Jews from Spain (1492). It is subdivided into twenty-four books, each of which contains a number of chapters dealing with sections, periods, or phases of the long spiritual and intellectual history of the Jewish people, and thus step by step, the vast panorama of the multifarious manifestations of the Jewish spirit in various times and lands, under different conditions and circumstances, is unfolded and revealed to us.

Judging this great literary work as a whole, it would be trite to merely say that it displays great erudition and a mastery of the subject on the part of the author, for it contains much more than a mass of data, scholarly research, accurate information, and wide learning. It contains that quality which is usually lacking in erudite tomes and is the mark of the highest literary productions, namely creativeness. The characteristics which distinguish the history of Weiss from all other preceding works in the same field and which give it permanent and lasting value are its completeness, critical keenness in the interpretation of sources, and remarkable orderliness and unity of construction, and a well-defined point of view. Of these characteristics, the last-named, is the most important one. In fact, the point of view is the source from which all the others emanate. However, though I described it as well-defined, it must not be assumed that it is explicitly stated by the author. On the contrary, he hardly refers to his view in the preface to the volumes. Still,

it is embodied in the entire work and serves as its background and canvas on which the history of the spiritual development in Israel is traced. It can be briefly characterized as synthetic and vitalistic—both traits completing each other. It is synthetic, inasmuch as in it the antagonism between the orthodox view of tradition which looks upon it as a thing completed in a distant past and unchanged during the ages, and the radical which considers it an outgrowth of peculiar conditions extraneous to the real nature of Judaism, is dissolved and reconciled. The synthesis though depends on the trait of vitalism. According to Weiss, the oral tradition of Israel in all its manifestations both in the legal and practical aspect and that of religious beliefs and opinions is not only closely allied to the fundamental expressions of Jewish life but forms an integral part of that life. The scholars throughout the ages were not only the bearers of tradition but also its creators as well as the moulders of the life of the people. At certain times, it is true, we note aberrations and undoubtedly individual savants were carried away by excessive discussions which resulted in undue religious severities that impeded the progress of life rather than accelerated it, but on the whole, there is the pulse of life beating in that tradition in all its changes and forms.

Looking upon tradition from this point of view as one of the fundamental expressions of Jewish life in all times, Weiss cannot agree with the orthodox conception of its early or Sinaitic completeness, for life is a process, nor with the liberal radical view that it is a later development, and he, therefore, posits its origin simultaneously with that of the written law or the Pentateuch. Hence, he asserts in the first chapter of the book that from the very time the laws were stated in the Pentateuch there was in existence an oral tradition. Nay, even more, some of the written laws were based on those traditions which were current among the Israelites. Likewise, it is his belief that there were oral explanations of certain laws given at the time the laws were enacted by Moses through divine inspiration. He corroborates his view by numerous proofs from the Pentateuch where the cryptic and incomplete form of the precepts necessitates the assumption of an oral tradition which existed side by side with the written law from the very beginning. Once the existence of an oral tradition at the earliest period in the life of the people as a necessary complement to the Torah is established, it is evident that the further development of that tradition constituted the very core of the development of the entire Jewish life. Only by understanding

its unfolding can we grasp the inner spirit of Jewish history. The oral tradition was the means by which the Torah was interpreted and made to apply to the conditions of life; and since there was hardly a time in Jewish history when there was no Torah, there was also no time when there was no oral tradition. Hence, there results from Weiss' basic conception of the oral tradition the completeness of his work.

The completeness is both quantitative and qualitative. Unlike Frankel (Sec. 76), he does not begin his history of tradition with the return of the Jews from the Babylonian exile when the development of the oral law becomes evident and marked, but traces it from the period of the Judges. He devotes a whole book to this subject where by penetrating search in the historical and prophetic books of the Bible, he reveals a constant current of oral tradition in action throughout the period of the First Commonwealth. Supporting his view by references and ingenious explanations of sources, he shows us how the leaders and prophets expounding a living tradition, modified, altered and widened the rather rigid laws of the Torah so that they became more pliable to meet the conditions of life; and what is more, they even abrogated temporarily a written law if conditions demanded it, just as we find the later scholars did.

In this expedition in the uncharted terrain of the first period of oral tradition, Weiss disregards, on the whole, the extreme views of Bible critics. He believes that the historical books, irrespective of whether they were written earlier or later, contain the true facts and creditable traditions of the past and are not imaginary pictures of a later state of things projected into the past.

The completeness is further expressed in the fact that the treatment of development of oral tradition in the later periods is extensive and embraces all phases; while Halakah or the legal aspect is especially dwelt upon, the other spiritual currents, such as the Agada and its literature, the Apocrypha and kindred books embodying various manifestations of the Jewish spirit are also fully described and the content delineated. Tradition, to Weiss, is very broad, embracing all spiritual phenomena; laws, views, opinions, ethics, and even mystic currents, for they all have one source—the Bible and life. Nor are the other factors which contributed to the development of these spiritual phenomena omitted, namely the political conditions and the contact with other nations which resulted either in the modification of certain laws, or, on the contrary, in the enactment of new laws

or in the institution of ordinances to meet the exigency of the times.

The qualitative completeness is evident in the preservation of the broadness of view of periods and movements, the emphasis of the spiritual factors in the process of development, and in the integration of thousands of facts and data into one grand portrait. In spite of the fact that the author cites innumerable references and quotes thousands of Halakic and Agadic statements the general view is not lost in the multitude of details, but is always kept in sight. This, of course, led to unity of construction. The author makes painstaking efforts to present the long process of development of tradition in Israel in all periods and centers as a unified progression by searching out the causes which brought about the changes from one epoch to another, by assigning reasons for altered aspects of that development and by bringing to light motives and factors hitherto unnoticed. Such penetration into the course of spiritual events of a past age and the reconstruction of that life requires both a certain power of imagination and a keen critical ability. The sources are not explicit, the dates are incomplete, and besides are often contradictory. It is only through criticism and ingenious hypothesis that the gaps can be filled, contradictions reconciled, errors corrected, and new facts established. Weiss possessed both the critical ability and the quality of making successful hypotheses. He was, on the whole, a cool-headed man and of a rationalistic stamp of mind, but as he was saturated with the spirit of Talmudic literature, he intuitively reached to the depth of the historical process. By means of these, he achieved that unity so evident in his great work.

It is impossible to summarize the contents of the work which covers such a long period and deals with a multitude of subjects. We shall, therefore, limit ourselves to pointing out some of the most important views and theories which elucidate its character and value.

True to his fundamental view that tradition and life are bound together and mutually influence each other, the author in surveying the development of the Halakah and Agada from the time of the return from the Babylonian exile to the close of the Talmud, carefully states the reaction of the moulders of the spiritual life in Israel to political conditions and to movements which have arisen both among the Jews and in the outside world. Thus, he devotes a chapter to the delineation of the reflection of the expansion of Jewish political power under the Maccabean kings, John Hyrcanus and Alexander Jannaeus, in the Halakah. The conquests of these kings,

which enlarged the Jewish territory, necessarily affected the attitude of the scholars towards the relation of the Jews to their neighbors. Many severities in this regard had to be lightened and changed. On the other hand, when discussing the state of tradition in the last half century before the destruction of the Temple, he points out how the spirit of opposition to foreign rule on the part of the zealots or the nationalists dominated the Shammaite school of scholars who forced their will on the Hillelites, the milder and more peaceful savants, and enacted a series of ordinances aiming to separate the Jews from the other nations.

Similarly the rise of Christianity which originally was confined within the limits of Jewry, and the existence of a sect of Jewish Christians for several centuries, undoubtedly influenced Jewish life during the period. Weiss devotes several chapters, both in the first and in the second volume to the extent of that influence which he describes with great skill on the basis of numerous statements scattered throughout Talmudic literature. It was expressed, of course, negatively, namely by the enactment of a number of ordinances intended to oppose the spread of the movement among the Jews and to segregate the Jewish Christians from Jewry. It also caused changes in the ritual and brought about a clearer pronouncement of Jewish theology, especially of the views of Judaism on the value of practical religion, the Messiah, the destiny of Israel, sin and atonement, and kindred subjects. All these phases of the reaction of Jewish tradition to the new religion and its adherents are portrayed by our historian vividly by the integration of many cryptic statements of the Agada and the Halakah into a complete survey of the subject.

Weiss does not overlook the influence exerted by the religious views and practices of the Persians upon Jewish beliefs and practices, as well as the influence of the Greek and Roman ideas, especially that of Roman law upon the legal theories of the Jews. He devotes several chapters to the subject. It must be admitted that in regard to Persian influence upon Judaism, he is undoubtedly wrong in magnifying its importance. He was in this matter greatly influenced by Joshua Schorr, the radical Jewish scholar. Mere similarity of practice among two nations does not always indicate that it was borrowed by one nation from another. Besides, the Jews in Palestine in whose tradition he detects such extent of influence were far removed from the Persians. He is more correct in his judgment regarding the

Greek and Roman influence. That influence, as far as the law is concerned, was in general negative, namely many ordinances were enacted by the rabbis to warn the Jews against the unseemly practices of the Gentiles as well as against their aristocratic conceptions of social life. However, unlike Frankel, he admits that the Roman law had exerted a positive influence upon the development of Jewish civil law in Tannaitic times.⁵

In his tracing of the history of the Halakah from Hillel to the close of the Mishnah, he emphasizes, whenever the occasion presents itself, the influence of the conditions of life upon its progress, and points out numerous times how the early Tannaim did not hesitate to change or modify an old law if circumstances demanded it. Moreover, they even changed such laws on the basis of mere theory, namely if the new method of interpretation of the verses of the Bible necessitated such change. This view, which is reiterated again and again, is corroborated by him by references from Talmudic literature.

This tendency is an integral part of his general conception of the development of the Halakah. On the whole, he draws a line between Tannaitic and Amoraic Halakah. The first which ends with the close of the Mishnah (210 C.E.) was more animated by the spirit of life and ministered to its needs, while the latter is more theoretical and inclined to rigorousness. This view culminates in his brilliant defense of the Halakah against the views of many scholars in his time who saw in it a growth which impeded Jewish progress. He says in his closing chapters of the second volume as follows: Many think that oral tradition made the yoke of the Torah heavier, but the case is not so. One with an insight into Jewish life during the Second Commonwealth will certainly demur at the judgment of the critics of the oral law. It is quite evident that the extreme piety which dominated the life of the people at the end of a century after the return from the Babylonian exile would have led to a much severer type of Judaism were it not for the activity of the moulders of tradition. He quotes the Sabbath as an example. Again and again, the scholars decreed that a violation of the Sabbath is permissible in cases where saving of life is concerned, and yet the people rejected such teachings. The Hasmonean leaders permitted to carry on a war of defense on the Sabbath; still, Pompey conquered Jerusalem in 70 B.C.E. on a Sabbath day, one hundred years later, because no resistance was offered by the Jews. On that account,

⁵ *Dor Dor we-Dorshow*, Vol. II, Ch. IV.

Shammai, the leader of the religiously rigorous school, had to go to the other extreme in order to eradicate the popular view of the observance of the Sabbath and allow even offensive war on that day. Our historian proves through a series of enactments how zealously the Tannaim strove to mitigate the rigorous conception of the Sabbath. And what is true of the Sabbath is true of many other phases of Jewish law. He reiterates again his belief that tradition flowed out of the necessities of life and changed it for the better. The severities we see in it were caused by conditions which are unknown to us.

All this, however, refers to the Tannaitic tradition. The case was different with the Amoraim. In their activity he sees a reaction. The reaction consisted in excessive reverence for the opinions of the earlier teachers. The Amoraim lost touch with life, and progress was therefore impeded. Tradition became to a degree stationary and what was enacted in earlier times was considered sacred and immutable, though conditions changed. He especially deplores the misinterpretation by the Amoraim of the principle that no court can annul a decision of another court unless it is more numerous and excels the former in knowledge. Weiss claims that this principle was originally intended to prevent dissension in Israel, namely that two contemporaneous courts should not differ, but it never aimed to prohibit a later court from altering the decisions of an earlier one if conditions necessitated it. It was, however, misunderstood and the result was a constant tendency to severity. Another cause for rigorousness of later tradition, says our historian, was the development of dialectics to an extreme degree. The keenness exercised by these scholars produced a number of hypothetical laws and far-fetched suppositions which later generations adopted in practice. The Amoraim themselves never thought of applying such cases to life. It is for this reason that we find in the Talmud discussions about matters which have no bearing on reality. Weiss, though, offers defense for such methods by saying that due to the conditions of exile, study became not a means for applying law to life but an aim in itself.⁶

From what was said, we can understand our author's view as bearing upon Jewish tradition in modern times. He continually exalts the value of tradition and the law, but from time to time, he decries its aberrations, especially in post-Talmudic times. Weiss did not elaborate his opinion on the subject, but from his outbursts in

⁶ Ibid., Vol. III, pp. 24-25.

his work against the misunderstanding by later scholars of the ways of the earlier, we may notice his inclination towards the necessity of modifications in certain religious practices, though of a mild degree.

The foregoing sketch of some of the principal views, theories, and phases of treatment of the material hardly does justice to the work. But we must also set bounds to our evaluation. We cannot, however, refrain from remarking upon an important feature of the work which enhances its completeness. Not only do we obtain a broad general view of the progress of the entire tradition, its currents, eddies, deviations, and aberrations, but also of the lives of its creators and bearers which are presented in as complete a manner as possible. A large part of the volumes is devoted to the biographies of the Tannaim, Amoraim, Gaonim, and leading scholars of the Rabbinic period. Weiss delineates their lives and activities in detail and with love and reverence. He does not hesitate to point out occasionally some defects in the character of certain scholars, but he apologizes for them and even defends them against the Talmud itself. Of special importance are the chapters "The Beliefs and Opinions of the Jews," at the end of Volume I, and "The Beliefs and Opinions of the Jews According to the Talmud," at the end of Volume II. In a succinct but comprehensive manner he presents a summary of the Jewish religious and social views which is lucid and authenticated by hundreds of references from sources.

The same qualities which distinguish the first three volumes are also evident in the last two devoted to the history of tradition from 500 to 1500 C.E. with the exception that the account is not as extensive as in the earlier books. It is, however, not less complete, for the author surveys, in addition to the development of the Rabbinic Halakah, all other currents in Jewish life, such as Karaism and the interest of the scholars in the Hebrew language, in philosophy, and in mysticism. All these subjects are discussed and their relation to tradition and its reactions to them are delineated.

In concluding our view of this great history, we may say that though a number of conclusions reached by the author were later proved to be erroneous and though some personal views on certain subjects may be biased, as a whole, it is one of the lasting achievements of Jewish scholarship during the entire nineteenth century. Its value is further enhanced by its having been written in Hebrew, which makes it accessible to the Jews all over the world. In general, Weiss was a devotee of Hebrew and wrote all his works in that lan-

guage. He was thus one of the few Western Jewish scholars who enriched modern Hebrew literature by his learned essays and treatises.

Turning to the history of other branches of Jewish literature, we can say that though we do not find another comprehensive work of the calibre of Weiss, yet the fields were intensively cultivated and an exceedingly large number of scholars made important contributions towards a complete survey of each of the respective departments. Especially fruitful were the researches in the field of Jewish poetry, where, besides the outstanding works of Zunz described above (Sec. 73), a host of savants contributed each his share towards the later construction of a complete survey of Jewish poetic activity both sacred and secular throughout the ages.

One of the pioneers in the study of the history of sacred poetry who even preceded Zunz in this field was Wolf Heidenheim (1757-1832; Sec. 82). He was the first at the beginning of the last century who devoted himself to determining the authorship of the *Piyyutim* included in the German *Maḥsor* and described briefly the lives of the *Paitanim* in his introduction to his edition of that book published in 1802. Thirty-five years later, in 1837, his *ha-Piyyutim we ha-Paitanim* was published posthumously. In this later work, he gives a more complete list of the singers of the synagogue, alphabetically arranged, together with the poems they composed and many biographical data as well as critical and philological notes and comments. Heidenheim, as stated, limited himself only to such *Paitanim* whose poems were adopted by the German ritual; but as all pioneer work, it was defective and many data were incorrect. The field, therefore, required the assiduous labor and painstaking research of many scholars. It was then that Zunz came and in his two masterly works gave us a comprehensive survey of this phase of Jewish poetry. But before the second work of Zunz appeared, another scholar, Eliezer Landshut, wrote his *Amudé ha-Abodah* (The Pillars of Jewish Liturgy) which is a biographical and literary dictionary of all *Paitanim* whose poems are included in the rituals of all European Jewries as well as that of North Africa. The author gives as many biographical data as necessary but he devotes himself primarily to the enumeration and determination of the exact number of poems each of these singers composed. The articles contain valuable discussions of a historical and literary character as well as many philological notes explaining the meaning of words and phrases in the various poems. Unfortunately, the book was not completed, as it

ends with the letter **ץ**, the eighteenth letter of the alphabet. It contains much material gathered from many books and manuscripts and the author displays great historical learning and critical acumen in the sifting of the data and arriving at accurate conclusions. It did not lose its value even after the appearance of Zunz's comprehensive work, *Literaturgeschichte der synagogalen Poesie*, for as it is written in Hebrew and in the form of encyclopaedic articles, it is both accessible to a wider circle of readers and of greater service to students.

A work of high literary character evincing deep penetration on the part of the author into the spirit of Mediaeval religious poetry in general and the Spanish type in particular is Michael Sachs' *Die religiöse Poesie der spanischen Juden*. Sachs (1808-1864) who was a famous preacher in his time and a man of deep religious emotion and poetic feeling, was the proper man to present to the world the inner aspect of the poetic productions of the great singers of the Golden Age.

The desire to reveal both to the Jews of his time and also to non-Jews the beauty contained in the Jewish liturgy and the exalted spirit of its hymns and songs was the motive for his work. He hoped, as he states in his preface, that by his work which gives only a glimpse into the inner workings of the soul of the Jewish nation, he will be able to arouse the interest of the younger Jews in the literary treasures of their people as well as to call forth appreciation, in general literary and intellectual circles, of the Jewish contribution to the culture of humanity. For this purpose, he translated in the first part of his work a considerable number of selections from the poems of the leading Spanish-Jewish singers, such as Gabirol, ha-Levi, Moses and Abraham Ibn Ezra, and others into German. His translations excel all attempts of his predecessors by their lofty style and by the retention of the original poetic swing and depth of religious feeling expressed by the poets. Sachs, whose love for the sacred poetry of his people was unbounded, and whose soul was attuned to the thoughts and emotions permeating these *Piyyutim*, succeeded in conveying in his rendering the yearnings of the singers for God, the tremor of their hearts at the suffering of their people, and their longing for redemption in as stirring a manner as in the original.

The second part which forms the bulk of the work is devoted to an account of the historical development of the religious poetry of the Spanish Jews. In order to supply the proper background for

the subject which he treats in detail, he gives in the first two introductory chapters a general outline of the activity of the Jewish spirit from the destruction of the Temple to the beginning of the Mediaeval period. In a skilfull manner, he portrays the work of the leaders in shaping and moulding the life of the people in exile, their fortifying the spirit of the nation to withstand suffering by glorifying their past and by instilling in their hearts hope for the future. Judaism, says our author, never stood still; it always progressed and developed. With the Bible as the center of Jewish spiritual life, the teachers of the ages developed a whole literature which was divided into two main currents, Halakah and Agada. The first aimed to regulate the daily conduct of the people and was primarily the share of the learned; the second strove to make the teachings of the prophets and the sages the heritage of the people as a whole. It aroused their emotions, kindled their love for God and nourished their hope for redemption. It was the Agada which revived the poetic urge among the Jews to strike once more the lyre which had been silent since the days of the Psalmist.

Our author then turns, in his third chapter, to the description of the fundamental types of the sacred poetry, the Italian, Franco-German, and the Spanish. Following Rapoport, he believes Eliezer ben Kalir, the founder of the first type of *Piyyut*, to have been a native of Southern Italy. That type of poetry, says the author, helped to inculcate the teachings of the Agada in the heart of the people, for in it the spirit of the Midrash was revived in a new form, while the contents remained the same. It glorified the past, bewailed the sufferings of the people, strengthened the faith in God, and drew glowing pictures of the future in the manner of the Agada.

The Spanish sacred poetry reached a higher plane, for in addition to all the treasures of the Jewish spirit which it contained, it reflected the broad conceptions of philosophy and science cultivated by the savants and poets of the Golden Age. In it, thought and emotion were amalgamated, and the elements of deep Jewish religiosity and national aspirations were blended with those of universal speculation into harmonious and sublime conceptions of God, the world, the soul, and the destiny of Israel.

These observations are followed by a characterization of the leading Jewish bards of Spain, Gabirol, Abitur, Isaac Ibn Giat, ha-Levi, Moses and Abraham Ibn Ezra, and several others. These sketches are drawn with love and poetic insight which lay bare before us the

inner soul of the poets. Especially elucidating are the essays on Gabirol and ha-Levi. In the former, the universality and the breadth of conception of the philosophic poet as revealed in his poem, *Keter Malkut* (The Royal Crown, Vol. I, p. 226) are analyzed and explained. In fact, the bulk of the essay is a commentary on that poem, and our author does not even neglect to trace its influence on the succeeding poets as well as on many mystic writers. In the essay on ha-Levi, Sachs delineates the intrinsic qualities of the poems of the prince of Jewish bards, their deep religiosity, their unbounded love for his people, and the fine aesthetic feeling expressed in his secular songs. With keen penetration into the spirit of the poet, our author emphasizes a trait which distinguishes him from all preceding and succeeding singers. His longing for redemption, says he, differs from that of the others, for strong as this yearning was with them, it emanated from a desire to escape oppression and suffering, but not so with Judah ha-Levi. To him redemption is a soul-gripping emotion; the striving for it flows forth from his whole being with such energy and force that it becomes the center of his songs. He never doubts its coming and the joy of its visualization inspires him.⁷

The book closes with a chapter on the language, rhythm, and forms of poetic expressions employed by the Spanish poets. The work of Michael Sachs contributed much towards a better understanding of Mediaeval Jewish poetry in its intrinsic aspect and in its time exerted great influence on the generation. It was on reading the masterful translations of the selected poems by Sachs that Heine was moved to compose his own Jewish poems culminating in the creation of "Judah Ben ha-Levi," a poem which expresses deep love for Judaism, its spirit, and ideals.

One of the ablest and most energetic workers in the field of Jewish literature was Leopold Dukes (1810-1891). He was very prolific and made numerous contributions to almost every phase of this extensive subject but notably to the history of Hebrew philology and Mediaeval poetry. Spending over twenty years in the libraries of the British Museum and Oxford he explored their manuscript treasures and edited and published several collections of poems by famous bards, as well as treatises on grammar and lexicography. Of his most notable editions are *Kobez 'Al Yad*, containing selections from the large dictionary, *Eben Boħan*, by Menahem ben Shlomoh, a tenth century Italian philologist; *Sifrē Dikduk*, including the works on He-

⁷ *Religiöse Poesie*, p. 300.

brew grammar by Judah Ibn Ḥayyuj (Vol. I, Sec. 100) in Hebrew translation; *Kontres ha-Masoret*, the treatise of the Masorite Aaron ben Asher on accents and vowels; *Shirē Shlomoh*, a collection of poems by Gabirol; and the *Ginzē Oxford* (The Treasures of Oxford), a collection of various poems by Spanish singers as well as prose excerpts from manuscripts on different subjects. The value of these editions is greatly enhanced by the lengthy introductions, which discuss the historical and literary problems in connection with the published works, and the notes which explain and comment the difficult passages and verses.

His *Shirē Shlomoh* is distinguished by the inclusion of a large number of poems of Gabirol, which were unknown up to the time of this publication, by the extensive notes and comments, and by the valuable appendices which contain many excerpts from stray manuscript-treatises on certain philosophical problems, terms, and expressions. Our author returned again and again to the subject of Gabirol and published many more of his poems in various periodicals. He was thus one of the scholars who added much to our knowledge of this illustrious poet.

Dukes also wrote a considerable number of original works bearing on the history of several branches of literature, especially of poetry. The most noteworthy of these are: *Ehrensäule und Denksteine zu einem künftigen Pantheon hebräischer Dichter und Dichtungen*, containing biographical and bibliographical material for a future history of Hebrew poets and poetry; *Zur Kenntniss der neuhebräischen religiösen Poesie*, where he discusses the various forms of the sacred poetry and the different meters employed by the singers; *Nahal Kedumim* containing a survey of the history of Mediaeval Jewish poetry, illustrated by selections from the works of a number of poets; and *Literaturhistorische Mitteilungen über die ältesten hebräischen Exegeten, Grammatiker, und Lexicographen*, in which he discusses the activity of a number of early scholars in the field of Biblical exegesis, Hebrew grammar, and lexicography, and characterizes their contributions to the respective studies. In addition, he wrote also a biography of Moses Ibn Ezra and a treatise on proverbs and gnomic expressions in Talmudic literature entitled *Rabbinische Blumenlese* (Flower Gleanings in Talmudic Literature). It is a work of value where the subject of proverbs and gnomes is treated from a historical as well as a literary point of view. The book is divided into two parts, the first serving as an introduction to the entire subject of proverbs

and maxims in Jewish literature. It contains three chapters, the first treating of the nature of proverbs in general; the second of collections of maxims in Biblical, Apocryphal, and Talmudic literature; the third of such collections in the Spanish-Arabic period. The second part is a collection of six hundred and sixty-five Talmudic proverbs and maxims translated into German and explained by notes and comments on their origin. An appendix giving the most characteristic brief eulogies on the dead found in Agadic literature completes the volume.

Gabirol was the favorite of the Jewish scholars of the last century and became their subject of study. Another important collection of his poems was edited from manuscripts and published by Senior Sachs (d. 1893), entitled *Shir ha-Shirim Asher le-Shlomoh* (The Song of Songs of Solomon). It contains only twenty-nine sacred poems which were hitherto unknown, copied from manuscripts and rare prints from the library of Baron Horace Günzburg in Paris. However, its value consists not in the quantity of the poems but in the large number of notes and comments, which exceed the text many times. The author took painstaking care to explain every difficult word, phrase, or expression, citing parallels from Gabirol's other poems or from the works of other contemporary poets. He also supplied all Biblical and Agadic sources of the numerous allusions in the poems and did not neglect to correct many faulty readings of the manuscripts. The notes are at times too lengthy and often digress into extraneous subjects. But on the whole, they are a valuable aid for the understanding of the songs not only of Gabirol but of many other Mediaeval poets who employed similar allusions, metaphors, and expressions. Senior Sachs wrote also another book on Gabirol and some of his contemporaries where he discusses a few phases of his philosophy and poetic genius.

There were numerous scholars who devoted themselves to the study of Mediaeval Jewish poetry, and following in the path indicated by Zunz, Luzzatto, and Geiger, greatly enlarged our knowledge of the history of that important branch of Jewish literature. Almost every year during the second half of the nineteenth century brought forth several monographs on the productions of Mediaeval poets or editions of collections of poems which were unearthed by diligent hunters for literary treasures in the libraries of Europe or in the Orient. Among these are to be especially noted Jacob Eiger's edition of Abraham Ibn Ezra's *Diwan* and Abraham Harkavy's *Zikḥaron la-*

Rishonim (The Memory of the Early Generations). The first contains a large number of Ibn Ezra's poems which were collected by a Yemenite scholar in the fifteenth century and were preserved in a unique manuscript which is now in the possession of the Berlin library. Eiger devoted painstaking effort to publish the text as accurately as possible, and in his notes and comments he made many corrections. The notes also explain the difficult passages and elucidate the meaning of the poems. The author performed a great service to Jewish literature, for all earlier searchers in the field, such as Zunz and others, thought Ibn Ezra's *Diwan* lost, and its discovery enabled later scholars to publish a complete edition of this bard's poems.

Harkavy's volume consists of a large number of selections from the works of Samuel Ibn Nagrela or ha-Nagid (Vol. I, Sec. 123), hitherto unknown. The introduction and the notes enhance the value of the work and contribute much towards both the appreciation of the character of Samuel's poetry and the understanding of the poems.

An important contribution in the field of the history of Jewish literature is Adolph Neubauer's survey of the literary activity of the Jews of France and the German border provinces during the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, published in the twenty-seventh volume of *L'Histoire Littéraire Française*, entitled *Les Rabbins Français*. The work was edited by Ernest Renan and published under his name, and for this reason it is often cited as of joint authorship, Renan-Neubauer. It is divided into two parts, the first devoted to the Jewish literature of Northern France and the second to that of Southern France, or the Provence. The survey is comprehensive and detailed; hardly a phase of literary activity is omitted. The contribution of Jewish scholars to Biblical exegesis, to Talmudics and Rabbinics, to grammar and lexicography, to liturgy and sacred poetry, and to philosophy and science are discussed and analyzed. Of special interest are the chapters on the Jewish scientists where the contributions of such men as Jacob ben Makir (Vol. II, p. 320), Levi ben Gerson, Levi ben Abraham, Jacob Anatoli, and others, to science and to the spread of learning in Mediaeval Europe are described extensively.

Neubauer, who was one of the distinguished Jewish scholars of the last century, utilized all the results arrived at by the leading Jewish savants in their researches in all fields of Jewish literature, but added much of his own. As librarian of the Hebrew department of the Bodleian library in Oxford, he had access to a large number of Hebrew manuscripts, and he was thus able to determine the author-

ship of many books as well as to throw light upon many debatable historical and literary questions.

Though the survey is officially limited to the activity of Jewish scholars who lived in France, yet, as stated, it includes also a large number of scholars who lived in Germany and also in England, but were influenced by the great literary centers of Northern and Southern France. As a criterion of this influence, our author considers the use of French words by these savants in their works. As most of the Jews who lived in the Rhine provinces as well as in England were at that time conversant with French, he was thus able to include in his survey the works of Meir of Rothenburg, Eleazar of Worms, Abraham di Colonna, and many more German and English scholars. In his eagerness to show the influence the French environment had upon the Jews of France and those of the neighboring countries, Neubauer is very painstaking in his efforts to discover its traces in every phase of Jewish life. He was successful in bringing to light several French works written by Jews during the thirteenth century. Notable among them is a French elegy written by an anonymous singer on the martyrs of *Troyes* in 1288. We have several Hebrew *Kinot* commemorating the names of the saints who sanctified the name of God on that occasion which were recited in the synagogues for centuries. The French elegy proves to us that the Jews of France not only employed the vernacular as a means of conversation but also as a medium of literary production. It is possible that this elegy was recited in the synagogue on the anniversary of the death of the martyrs for the benefit of those to whom the Hebrew *Kinot* were not intelligible.

The survey includes also many biographical data and numerous comments upon the life and activity of the Jews of France during the two centuries it deals with, and is thus a valuable aid to students of Jewish history and literature.

90. KARPELES' HISTORY OF JEWISH LITERATURE

The works hitherto considered dealt only with the history of certain periods of literary activity or with that of various branches of Jewish literature, or even with the works of one or several writers. However, at the end of the last century, an attempt was made by Gustav Karpeles (1848-1905) to produce a complete history of Jewish literature, embracing the entire literary productivity of the Jewish people beginning with the Bible and ending with the last quarter of

the nineteenth century. It was a bold undertaking, for he had no predecessors in the field except Steinschneider (Sec. 79) whose article *Die jüdische Literatur* in Ersch and Gruber's Encyclopaedia served him as a basis. That article, though complete and extensive, is in its nature more of a sketch of Jewish post-Biblical literature than a history in the proper sense of the word. Karpeles' task then was not merely to expand and elaborate upon the data presented by Steinschneider as well as to coordinate the various currents and the literary tendencies of each period into an harmonious picture, but also to penetrate into the spirit of the different phases of that extensive literature and bring out their salient features. He succeeded more in the elaboration and coordination than in the delineation of the fundamental characteristics of the phases of Jewish literature. Karpeles' *Geschichte der jüdischen Literatur* consists of two volumes, the first covering the history from the Pentateuch to 1200 C.E. and the second completing the story to 1870. The author divides the entire Jewish literature into six periods or divisions: the first embracing the Bible; the second, the Jewish Hellenistic literature; the third, the Talmudic; the fourth, the Jewish-Arabic-Spanish literature; the fifth, the Rabbinic; and the sixth, Jewish literature of modern times. These divisions correspond with periods in Jewish history, and, of course, are subdivided into sections embracing literary phases or currents.

The work, on the whole, is distinguished by a number of qualities. It is complete as a survey as hardly any book of importance is omitted, and an attempt is made by the author not only to describe the external characteristics of the works discussed, but also to present some of their contents, though in a very brief way. Furthermore, each period or division is prefaced by an introduction giving the historical substratum. The author fails, however, to link the historical phase with the literary activity of the period and we miss the inner connection between the two. The surveys of the various branches of literature, though comprehensive, are often too brief and do not satisfy the needs of the student who wants more than a mere popular presentation of the subject. Especially deficient is the treatment of the Talmudic and Rabbinic literatures. Karpeles, who was more of a literary man than a Jewish scholar, could not, with the best of intentions, comprehend the full value of these literary divisions which in quantity exceed all others, nor could he penetrate into their inner nature and character. As a result, his description of them, especially of Rabbinics, is limited primarily to externals. Thus, the entire de-

velopment of Halakah and Agada during the period of the Second Commonwealth is disposed of in twenty pages while more than twice as much is devoted to the Apocrypha and Jewish Hellenistic literature, as if that type of literary productivity were the most original production of the Jewish genius of the period.

The principal defect of this important work, however, lies in its unsystematic arrangement of the material and the misleading titles of its divisions and subdivisions. Though the names of the divisions, as we have seen, indicate a proposed arrangement according to the phases of literature, in reality the case is not so, a defect which is especially evident in the treatment of the Mediaeval literature. Thus, under the general caption, "Jewish Hellenistic Literature," the development of Halakah and Agada during the period is subsumed. Under the title of "Rabbinic Literature" which covers a period of literary productivity of five hundred and fifty years (1200-1750), a motley of subjects is presented, legal works, Biblical exegesis, philosophy, poetry, science, and many more subjects. In spite of the fact that the author, in his introduction, protests vigorously against the Christian theologians who call Jewish Mediaeval literature by the name of Rabbinics, he himself commits the same error. The arrangement of the material in the last three divisions, namely from the close of the Talmud to modern times is primarily chronological, and all branches of literature are treated simultaneously.

More confusing and misleading are his titles of the subdivisions. Thus, under the name of "Kabbala" are included such works as the *Book of the Pious* by Judah ha-Ḥassid (Vol. I, Sec. 176) and the commentary of Bahya ben Asher on the Pentateuch. The first is, as we know, a strictly ethical book, and the other primarily a commentary on the Pentateuch. The fact that the author of the first was mystically inclined and that the second contains some Kabbalistic comments does not make the works a part of the Kabbala and one would hardly look for them under that heading. The teachings of the Kabbala proper, however, are disposed of in two pages. Again under the name of *Epigonen*, i.e. successors or heirs, a period of three centuries of literary productivity, from the twelfth to the sixteenth, is covered and an exceptionally large variety of works is treated by our author without due attention to the difference in character and subject matter. They are merely grouped under a title which is indefinite. It is quite clear that the author meant to indicate by the class name the lack of originality on the part of the authors. But

when we meet in this class philosophers like Levi ben Gerson and Hasdai Crescas, a codifier like Jacob ben Asher, and a poet like Immanuel of Rome, we wonder whether they were really only *Epigones* and possessed no originality. Such confusions and misjudgments could be easily multiplied and only indicate a lack of full comprehension of the value of the literary productivity of the second half of the Mediaeval period. This is particularly noted in the treatment of the Rabbinic literature of that period which is exceedingly brief and limited to bibliographical notices.

Meager is also the treatment of the literature of the Modern Period. The survey of the ramified literary activity of an epoch of one hundred and twenty years which was so colorful in its manifestations and so manifold in its movements and expressions occupies only sixty odd pages. Little beyond a mere skeleton of the literature can be expected from such a brief account, especially when the author wants to be all-embracing and includes even Hassidism and its literature in that succinct statement. Peculiarly enough Hassidism is treated in the chapter entitled *Die Schule Mendelssohns*. The most extensive space in this division is given to the development of Jewish learning or the "Science of Judaism," while the Hebrew Haskalah literature is barely noticed.

Yet, with all these shortcomings, Karpeles' history is an important work and a worthy attempt to present a synthetic view of the entire Jewish literature. Some of its chapters have great literary merit, such as those on the Bible and on Jewish Hellenistic literature. In the first, the author gives a fine aesthetic and literary appreciation of the Biblical books keeping aloof from the vexed questions of Biblical criticism. In the second, we obtain a detailed presentation of the literature of the Jews in the Hellenistic diaspora together with an elucidation of its motives and tendencies.

The value of the work is enhanced by the elegant style and the poetic passages which are strewn over many of its pages. It is also permeated with a spirit of love for the great productions of the Jewish people and many a page glows with emotion and is saturated with the deep feeling of reverence of a true and loyal son of Israel. The book was later translated into Hebrew by Naḥum Sokolow.

91. GEOGRAPHY AND ARCHAEOLOGY

Jewish learning, which busied itself with all expressions of Jewish life in the past, did not overlook the branches of historical geography

and archaeology, and a number of scholars devoted themselves to the exploration of these fields.

One of the most noteworthy contributions both to historical geography and to the knowledge of Jewish antiquities is Solomon Munk's *Palestine*, published in 1863 as a volume in the series entitled *L'Universe* which dealt with the geography and archaeology of the countries and peoples of the world. It is divided into five books, the first of which deals with the geography, fauna and flora of Palestine; the second, with Biblical ethnography; the third, with the history of the Jews in Bible times; the fourth, with the life and culture of the people; and the fifth, with the history of the Second Commonwealth. The erudition displayed by the author is remarkable, for the various subjects are treated in great detail, and thousands of data culled from numerous sources are coordinated into an harmonious whole. In his description of the Holy Land, Munk not only delineates its topography and the general physical features, but also dwells with great length upon the description of all the important cities, whether still existing, or those which existed in historical times. In the case of the latter he identifies their former location and discusses the role they played in the life of the people and the references to them in literature. He explored the Bible minutely and also drew upon other possible ancient and Mediaeval sources in Hebrew, Greek, Latin, and Arabic for his descriptions. As a result, we not only obtain a comprehensive knowledge of the geography of Palestine, but are also enlightened on many historical and literary questions and even our knowledge of the Bible itself is much deepened.

Of special importance are the books treating of the Biblical history and archaeology, which are almost separate works by themselves. In general, the author presents the history of the early period from a conservative point of view following mainly the account of the Bible, but occasionally adding data drawn from extra-Biblical sources which illuminate the account and solve many a difficulty. Masterful is his résumé of the content of the Pentateuch which is both extensive, occupying about one hundred pages, and thorough. As an introduction to the subject the author begins with a discussion of the points pro and con in regard to the Mosaic authorship of the Torah. He concludes with a compromise, namely that the greater part of the Pentateuch emanated undoubtedly from the hand of Moses, but that there are also later additions which were placed there by an editor

who lived close to the Babylonian exile. He then presents his résumé under three aspects: the doctrines and ethics of the Torah or its philosophy and view of life; the cult and purely religious ceremonies; and the social and state laws. He describes minutely the sacrifices, the priests, their functions, vestments, mode of temple worship, the Sabbath and the festivals, and all other precepts of a purely religious nature. Under the third aspect, the social and political organization, the laws of war, civil, family and criminal law are all treated in detail and in a systematic and exact manner, and as a result, the reader obtains a comprehensive view of all the Biblical laws concerning society and state. The fourth book devoted to the archaeology of the Jews gives a complete view of the ancient civilization. The author first deals with the physical features of civilization, namely agriculture, housing, dress and ornaments, and the kinds of food and drink. He then passes on to family and social life, describes at length the status of the woman, marriage and divorce, burial customs, arts and crafts, social manners, commerce and industry, weights and measures, currency, travel and modes of navigation. The political life in all its phases in peace and war is discussed next, and finally the cultural and intellectual life is depicted. The role of the scholar, the state of the sciences, the scripts, the nature of Hebrew poetry, and the cultivation of the fine arts, especially music, are all delineated with painstaking effort. In connection with the art of music among the Jews during Biblical times a detailed account is given of the musical instruments spoken of in the Bible, particularly of the manner of their construction and mechanism. In view of the fact that the author derived most of his material from the Biblical books, one wonders at his ability to obtain so much information on all aspects of ancient Jewish life, including the material side of that life from books which apparently deal with matters spiritual and religious. However, the information is all there, provided one knows how to read his Bible.

In the fifth book, Munk gives a survey of Jewish history from the Restoration to the destruction of the Second Temple. Curiously enough, while discussing the character of the Jewish sects in that period, he gives in connection with the Essenes a sketch of the teachings of the Kabbala. It was his view that the doctrines of the Kabbala had their origin in the esoteric theories of the Essenes, though we have no definite knowledge of them.

The work concludes with two appendices, one giving a bird's

eye view of the history of Palestine in general and of the Jews in that country in particular, from the destruction of the Temple to the middle of the nineteenth century, and the other, containing a brief description of the itineraries of the Holy Land, written during the ages. This work is of permanent value, for though our knowledge on all the subjects treated therein was enriched since its composition, yet it contains much information and sound learning which can be little affected by the changes of time.

Another important work on the geography of Palestine is the *Tebuot ha-Areẓ* (literally the Fruit of the Land) by Joseph Schwarz (1804-1865). Schwarz, who was a Talmudic and Biblical scholar, devoted himself from the time he settled in Jerusalem in 1833 to the study of the topography, the geography, and the natural history of the Holy Land. He explored the country in its length and breadth, learned the Arabic language, and endeavored to identify the location of the cities referred to in the Bible and the Talmud by investigating the local traditions and attempting to discover in contemporary Arabic names of towns, villages, and ruins of ancient cities the traces of older names of places. He also utilized for his purposes, besides the Bible, Talmudic literature and the various Aramaic and Arabic translations of the Bible, also Eusebius' *Onomasticon* and other sources. The results of his researches he presented in his book. The work, written in the manner of Rabbinic treatises rather than in a scientific way, contains much valuable information which sheds light on Biblical and Talmudic geography.

It is divided into two parts, the first devoted to the geography and natural history of Palestine, and the second to the political history of the country from the destruction of the Second Temple to his own days. In the chapters which deal with the geography of the land, the author first delineates its boundaries according to Biblical and Talmudic records, identifying the ancient borders with certain modern localities, describes the rivers, mountains and valleys of Palestine and concludes with an extensive account of all the cities and towns which existed in the country during historical times. This description is fuller than Munk's for he includes also all places mentioned in the Talmud and Midrashim as well as those referred to by Josephus. The topography of the land is presented according to the division of the land among the tribes of Israel, as recorded in the Book of Joshua, and is thus of great help to Bible students. Several chapters deal with the ethnography and the geographic distribution

of the peoples mentioned in the table of the descendants of Noah included in the tenth chapter of Genesis. These, however, are unscientific and of little value. The geographic section closes with a chapter on Jerusalem, where the topography of the city in historical times and in the author's days is discussed in detail and with much learning.

The chapters on the natural history of Palestine deal with the fauna, flora, and the minerals of the land primarily as they are reflected in the Bible and Talmudic literature, and from this angle the brief descriptions are of value. The survey of the political history given in the second part contains little new material, as it is culled from well-known sources, except for some additional data on the history of the Jews in the Holy Land during the eighteenth century which the author was able to gather from oral tradition. The book was later translated into English by Isaac Leeser under the name of the *Geography of Palestine*. Contributions to the geography of Palestine and Babylonia were also made by Adolph Neubauer, A. Berliner, and Hirsch Hildesheimer.

The treatise of Neubauer, *La Geographie du Talmud*, published in 1868 was crowned with a prize by the *Academie des Inscriptions* of France. It presents a complete survey of all geographic data found in the post-Biblical Jewish literature up to the close of the Talmud in 500 C.E. It is divided into two books, the first of which is devoted to Palestine. The author describes in great detail according to the sources, the general topography of the land; he then takes up each of the three divisions of the land, namely Judea, Galilee, and Transjordanian separately with special attention to the important cities of each division.

The second book deals with all lands which are usually referred to in the Talmudic sources by the general name *Huz la-Arez* (Lands beyond Palestine), namely Syria, Asia Minor, Babylonia, Africa, and some European countries. Our author devotes a chapter to each land, coordinating the scattered data of the literature referring to it in a more or less connected description. In an appendix joined to the work, Neubauer treats briefly with the customs and nature of the people inhabiting these lands as reflected in the literary sources.

The work of Berliner, *Beiträge zur Geographie und Ethnographie Babylonien in Talmud und Midrasch*, in two parts, is limited in scope and consequently its subject is treated in greater detail. The first part describes the Babylonian environment in general, embracing

both the physical and ethnographic phases. The author deals with climatic conditions, the manners of the people, the food they ate, the clothing they wore, and their state of culture. In the second part, the boundaries of the country, rivers, canals, and important cities are treated with more particularization and in an alphabetical arrangement.

Hildesheimer's *Zur Geographie und Ethnographie Babylonien*, though not as thorough and comprehensive as the preceding works, adds to our knowledge of the geography and the peoples of this important center in Jewish history.

92. BOOKS OF TRAVEL

The "wanderlust" which is characteristic of the Jews was as effective a factor in producing a travel literature during the Modern Period as in the preceding one. Curiously, however, Palestine, though still occupying an important place in the tales of the wanderers, is no more the center of the description except in a few books devoted to that purpose. Most of the travelers whose works we possess were moved by the desire to visit distant countries in Asia and Africa in order to acquaint themselves with the life of the Jews there whose existence they only heard of but whose mode of living, manners, and customs were quite unknown to them as well as to European Jews in general. Many of these books describe, therefore, visits to such countries as Yemen, Persia, India, North Africa, the Caucasus, the new Jewish settlement in Australia, and even the Crimea in Europe. A few, however, are devoted to Palestine and neighboring countries. The importance of these works lies though not in the geographical information they impart, for much more can be found on this subject in other literatures written by expert non-Jewish explorers and travelers, but in the historical material embodied in them and in the description which they present of Jewish life in various countries as it was lived a century or half a century ago.

The most noted of the books of travel are: *Nach Jerusalem* by the German-Jewish poet, Ludwig August Frankl; *Eben Sapir* (literally the sapphire stone, named after the patronymic of the author) by Jacob Sapir ha-Levi; *Masa'ē Yisrael* (The Journeys of Israel) by Israel Benjamin; and the *Sefer ha-Masa'ot* (Book of Travel) by Joseph Judah Charni.

i. The first is a charming and poetic description of travels in Syria and Palestine undertaken by the author in the year 1856. Frankl

was commissioned by Elisa Herz of Vienna to go to Jerusalem and establish there from the funds which she set aside in memory of her father, Simon Lämél, a school for Jewish children which should bear his name and where Jewish and secular subjects should be taught. This is the well-known Lämél school which still exists in Jerusalem. He utilized this opportunity to make a more extensive journey through the near East, Syria, and Palestine, and the results of his observations he described in this work of two volumes.

The first volume describes his journey through the near East and Syria which ran from Trieste through Corfu, Athens, Constantinople, and thence to Salonica, Smyrna, and Brussa in Asia Minor, the islands of the Greek Archipelago, Damascus, Tripolis, Baalbek, the Lebanon Mountains, and Beyrut to Jaffa. Frankl, who was a gifted poet, a classical scholar, and a man of culture, and possessed in addition, a keen sense of observation and a deep interest in the fate and situation of his brethren, displays all his talents and abilities in the description of his travels. We are carried aloft on the wings of his poetic genius by his pictures of the beauties of Hellas for which he had a deep love, the many-colored life of Constantinople, the picturesqueness of Oriental customs and manners, the sublimity of the Lebanon Mountains, and the grandeur of their ancient giant cedars which in his time were still in existence. Still more are we instructed by the mass of information he imparts on the life he observed in all its phases. He was exceptionally well-fitted for obtaining such multifarious information. He was famous both as a poet and as a medical man, possessed letters of recommendation from the highest officers of the Austrian Empire to all consuls of the East, and had also many personal acquaintances among the European officials in the service of the Turkish government. All these afforded him opportunities to see many things usually hidden from the eyes of the European travelers, to be received by emirs, pashas, and sheiks, by dignitaries of the Eastern churches, and by other personages high in the religious and secular worlds. He was received by the king and queen of Greece, by the famous Abd-El-Kadr, the Emir of Mascara who opposed the French conquest of Algiers for fifteen years and later lived in Damascus, and received a present from him as a reward for a German poem he wrote in his honor. He was even given the rare opportunity of visiting the palace of the Sultan. Our author describes his many-sided experiences in detail, even giving the content of the conversations he held with men of importance on religious and political

matters. His observant eye noted every fact of importance in the life of the peoples of the countries he passed through, and we are thus supplied with a mass of data and incidents illustrating the life of the near-East in all its colors.

Greater than all is the value of his portrayal of Jewish life in the cities he visited. With great devotion and love, he painstakingly obtained data from the rabbis, secretaries, and representatives of communities about the number of Jews in each city, their economic and spiritual states, the communal and charitable organizations, their finances, income, and debt, as well as other items of interest. He visited the schools, the synagogues, and the cemeteries, and all phases of Jewish life and activity in all the cities of the near-East from Corfu to Beyrut are delineated in a masterly way. With great feeling and often with pathos he deplores the poverty of the Jews in the East and reproaches them for the defects which caused that state, chief of which he considered the custom of early marriages and the lack of education, both of which retarded the economic development of the Jewish communities of the Orient. He notes every phenomenon in Jewish life in the East, and we are thus told some interesting facts about the sect of Jewish Marranos in Salonica. These were the descendants of the followers of Sabbatai Zebi who, like him, embraced Islam, but remained inwardly faithful to Judaism and carried on an isolated existence, mingling neither with the Moslems nor with the Jews. Frankl tells us that in his time the sect was divided into several groups which were separated among themselves. All, however, guarded the secrets of their religion so scrupulously that they abstained from drinking wine or any intoxicating liquor for fear that they might reveal, when in an intoxicated state, the secrets of their religion.

The second volume is devoted entirely to Palestine and the larger part of the book deals with Jerusalem and its environs. The most interesting feature of the work is not the poetic descriptions of the natural scenes of the land and the sacred places, though they charm us by their beauty and loftiness, but the more prosaic account of the life of the Jews of Palestine at that time in its numerous aspects. Frankl's story is a historical document of the highest quality, for in it the Jewish Palestine of the sixth decade of the last century is reflected in all its details. He was, as said, a good observer, and besides, his mission and prestige brought him in contact with every form of Jewish life in the Holy City, and, consequently, not a single

datum escaped him. His information can, therefore, serve us as a standard of measurement for the progress made by the Jews of Palestine during the eighty years which have elapsed since then. We learn from our author that the entire Jewish population in Palestine was at that time only 10,639 persons; that more than half of that number lived in Jerusalem, namely 5700 of which 4000 were Sephardim. The picture he paints of the economic, moral, and cultural situation of the Jewish community of Jerusalem is, on the whole, a very dark one, and we have good reason to believe that it is not exaggerated, for besides the fact that his account is supported by data and figures, Frankl loved his people deeply and whole-heartedly.

Thus, we are told that of the entire Jewish population of Jerusalem there were only two hundred and thirty-nine persons who earned a living from various occupations, and of these only fourteen were engaged in manual labor or trades. The others were divided as follows: Forty teachers in the *ḥadarim*, five secretaries of institutions, two musicians, twelve merchants, twenty store-keepers, three money changers, and ten peddlars. The large majority of the Jewish inhabitants were without any occupation and lived on the proceeds of the *Ḥalukkah*, that is the money contributed by the Jews of the world for their upkeep. Our author points out that the results of such an economic state were not only poverty but also moral degradation. The latter was expressed primarily in an aversion for work, engendered by the belief that whoever lives in Jerusalem performs an act of grace for the Jews of the world, and consequently they are obliged to support him irrespective of his own financial status. Our author relates an incident which strikingly illustrates the attitude of the Jews of Jerusalem, at the time, towards their brethren of the Diaspora. When Moses Montefiore came to Jerusalem on one of his visits, he brought with him a large sum of money in silver dollars for distribution among the poor. He gave to all who presented themselves to him, and that included almost all the Jews of Jerusalem, a dollar each. When he was about to leave the city, he found that he had distributed more than he had expected and that he did not leave for himself the necessary traveling expenses. He asked for a loan and that was given to him on high interest by one of those who only a few days before had stood in line to receive a dollar from the benefactor.⁸

Poverty and the tendency to live on the gifts of others were the

⁸ *Nach Jerusalem*, Vol. II, p. 61.

cause of another dark phase of Jewish life in the Holy City, namely their rather indifferent attitude towards the activities of the missionaries who, at that time, were rather successful. Our author gives a list of forty converted Jews who lived in Jerusalem, thirty of whom were of the Ashkenazic part of the population and only ten of the more numerous community of the Sephardim. Taking into consideration that the thirty converts were all heads of families, it undoubtedly constituted a considerably large proportion of the Ashkenazic Jews. Frankl further informs us that when parents reproached their children for their conduct, the latter frequently threatened that they would go to the missionaries. He also tells of an episode that when a young man, the son of very pious parents, became a convert to Christianity, his family did not sever relations with him, and he was often invited to dinner by them. Of course, much of this indifference can be explained by the poverty of the people who could not withstand the temptation of gifts and money offered by the missions.

Not much brighter is the picture the author presents of the religious and educational situation of the Jerusalem Jewry at the time. Piety was prevalent but not of the type which inspires our admiration, but of the narrow-minded extremely fanatical type which was hostile to every attempt to bring in any secular knowledge, and fought all such endeavors with every means at their disposal, legitimate and illegitimate. The story of the struggle in carrying out his mission of establishing the Lāmel school is a curious page in the history of Jerusalem Jewry and can serve as an indicator of the wide changes which have taken place in Jewish life in the Holy City during eighty years. Frankl acquainted the Jews of Jerusalem of his purpose long before he came there by publishing a pamphlet entitled *Kol Mebaser*, wherein he outlined the program of the school, assuring the leaders that it would be placed under the supervision of rabbis as far as the religious education was concerned, and that the only innovation will be the teaching of elementary secular knowledge including Arabic and German. Yet, when he came to the Holy City, he found an opposition organized against him. The opposition, however, was only on the part of the Ashkenazic Jews; the Spanish Jews with the chief rabbi, the *Hakam Bashi*, at their head welcomed the establishment of the school. The opponents fought so bitterly against the plan that he was exasperated. In vain did he negotiate with them, assuring them of his pious intentions; the answer was invariably,

"We want no schools; the study of the Talmud alone is sufficient; no innovations must be instituted in Jerusalem, for all such attempts will lead to heresy." Fortunately for Frankl, the Sephardim were not intimidated by the protests of the zealots and gave him their support. He then proceeded to establish the school. The opponents placed him under a ban, posted placards in the streets of Jerusalem calling Frankl apostate, and insulting him in the grossest terms; urchins threw stones at him in the street, and the Shofar was sounded at the Wailing Wall by several fanatics during a special prayer offered by them that God might avert the impending evil. Accusations were spread against him that he is uncircumcised and that he intends to place a cross in the ark of the synagogue, and similar charges. Frankl, however, was not deterred, and overcoming all obstacles, he established the school which brought much good to Jerusalem for several generations.

The volume possesses great interest also on account of its other features, chief of which are the descriptions of many places in Palestine, as well as those of the sacred shrines of other religions. Because of the connections and the prestige of our author, he had opportunities to visit places usually forbidden to Jewish travelers. His detailed account of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre and the monasteries of the different denominations grouped around it is one of the best. Similarly can be said of the description of the Mosque of Omar. Much, of course, was changed in the exterior of these places, but certainly not the interior, and his story can, therefore, still be of interest.

The volume contains a collection of legends which the author gathered in Jerusalem, and some of which are not reproduced in other works. We shall, therefore, quote two which concern King David. It is told that King David practiced the trade of making coats of mail which he sold and from the proceeds provided food for his table. This art was taught him by an angel who told him that every king must learn, besides the art of government, also one more art, so that in case his people remove him from the throne, he may earn his bread by the labor of his hands.* Another story tells that King David never left his capital without carefully locking his bedroom. He was, therefore, alarmed when once, on the Sabbath day, on his return from a visit, he found the door of his room open, and upon

* Reference to David's invention of coats of mail is found in the Koran, sura xxi. 38, but no mention of his practice of such art, nor the reason for such practice.

looking in he found a stranger therein. "Who art thou?" asked David. "I am," replied the stranger, "he who fears no kings, and for whom no ruler nor any closed door can bar the way." Then David said sadly, "Thou art death," and he lay down quietly on his bed and returned his spirit to God. These two stories are typical examples, illustrating both the esteem in which labor was held by the wise men of the East and their peaceful submission to the power of death.

We cannot part with this remarkable book without mentioning an episode which bears both on the history of Zionism and on the attitude of the English people towards the settlement of Palestine by the Jews. Frankl records a conversation he held with an Englishman named Rogers, British vice-consul at Haifa. The latter asked him, "Do you believe in the restoration of the Jews to Palestine?" "No," replied our author. "But," insisted the Englishman, "the prophets foresaw it, and the Jews must return in order to fulfill their prophecy." When in reply, our author reproached the Britisher for the efforts made by his countrymen to convert the Jews of Jerusalem, the latter then admitted that it was his belief that the promised future is not for the Jews who still awaited the Messiah but for those who acknowledged the one who had already come. It is they who shall fulfill the prophecy. He, however, still insisted that it must be fulfilled. Frankl then attempted to explain the prophecies symbolically and developed the Jewish mission theory which is well-known to us. To this Rogers rejoined that the case is not so; Jewish restoration was much nearer to its realization than the Jews thought it was. Referring to the Crimean War which took place a year before (1855), he said that there were many statesmen in England who thought that were Czar Nicholas I of Russia to have carried out his plan of the division of Turkey, Palestine would have gone to the Jews. They figured to make it another Greece, and Jerusalem a glorious capital. This, continued the Englishman, was thought of seriously by the leaders in Parliament, and concluding, he said, "Do you call such men dreamers? I wish to assure you that there are many men in England who believe in the literal fulfilment of the prophecies of old and yet they think quite soberly of the interests of the British Empire." This conversation in the light of later events needs hardly any comment.

ii. Of lesser interest but still of great importance is the *Eben Sapir* by Jacob Sapir (b. 1823) which describes his travels in Egypt,

Southern Arabia, India, and Australia. Jacob Sapir came to the Holy Land as a child of ten, and though raised in strict piety and given an education exclusively Talmudic, he managed in some way to acquire a rudimentary knowledge of some European language and also of Arabic. On account of his accomplishments, he was chosen by the leaders of both Sephardic and Askenazic institutions as an agent of the Holy City to collect contributions from the Jews of India and Australia and other distant countries. He left in the winter of 1856 for his destination and made his first stop in Egypt on his way through the Red Sea to India. There, however, he met with misfortune, as he was induced, at a fair near Alexandria, to buy a treasure of ancient silver coins which, of course, turned out to be a fraud, and he meanwhile lost his money and could not continue on his journey to India. He decided, therefore, to first visit Yemen and later continue to his destination. It is this incident that we have to thank for the fruitful visit to that unknown country. The results of his observations are embodied in the work written in two parts, the first part devoted to the life of the Jews in Egypt and Yemen, and the second to that of the other countries.

His route lay from Alexandria to Cairo and neighboring cities to Fayyum in upper Egypt and thence back to Suez from which he went by boat to Jiddah and other Arabian coast cities, arriving at Hodeida, an important Red-sea port on the border of Yemen. There he disembarked and proceeded to explore the interior of the country and visit all the important settlements in this unknown land. He spent nine months in his travels through that part of Arabia, making most of his journeys on foot, for as a Jew, he was not allowed to ride either camel, horse or donkey, as such privileges were reserved by the fanatical Moslems for themselves only and not for the heretics. At the border of Yemen, the Turkish rule stopped and the interior of South Arabia was governed by a number of bigoted Imams, i.e. priest rulers who oppressed the Jews in a merciless manner. The picture our traveler paints of the life of the Jews in that mountainous country is, therefore, a sad one, still it arouses our interest for it is complete and all-embracing.

Sapir was a good observer, and in addition, as a scholar he was especially interested in the religious and cultural aspects of Jewish life, and consequently no phase of activity of the Yemenite Jews escaped him. We learn of their precarious political status according to which they were placed beyond the pale of any law. Their wealth

and even their lives were always at the mercy of the Moslems, and if a Jew was robbed or even killed by a Moslem, the robber or murderer usually escaped punishment. The Jews were disqualified as witnesses and prohibited, as said, to ride animals, or wear the dress of the Moslems, and in general, were subjected to many other discriminations. Under such circumstances, their economic position could not but be of a very low order; they were prevented from engaging in agriculture and commerce was little developed among them. As a result, most of the Jews were occupied in various trades and handicraft. In fact, they alone constituted the skilled working class of Yemen, and this enabled them to subsist among the fanatical Arabs of the land who were in need of the skill of the Jews. Their love for manual labor was so great that even their rabbis were not supported by the communities but earned their living by the sweat of their brow, working as blacksmiths, tailors, and other crafts.

A large part of the volume is devoted by the author to a description of the religious and cultural status of the Jews and of their social manners and customs. We are told that they were very pious and were admirers of learning. Yet the study of the Talmud was not prevalent among them and their rabbis devoted themselves mostly to the study of the Code of Maimonides which constituted their guide in all religious matters.⁹ In general, copies of the Talmud were few among them, and only a limited number of scholars engaged in its study. On the other hand, we are informed that almost all the Yemenite Jews were versed in the Bible and that many of them even knew it by heart together with the *Targum*. Our author also tells in detail of their knowledge of Hebrew and the manner of its pronunciation, of their liturgy its order and form, of their mode of celebration of festivals, weddings and engagements, and other religious and social events, and of their beliefs and superstitions. Of great interest is the information by Sapir that in his time the Yemenite Jews recorded the years according to the Seleucid era and not according to the era of the creation of the world used by all Jews (Vol. I, p. 9; Vol. II, p. 170). That era was used by the Jews of Babylon in Gaonic times, and was also employed by the Jews of Egypt up to the sixteenth century. In Yemen, however, it was retained to the middle of the last century and may still be in use.

Sapir also made investigations to determine the date of settlement of the Jews in Yemen. He records their tradition that the Jews

⁹ For the exceptional reverence of the Yemenite Jews for Maimonides see Vol. II, p. 534.

came there immediately after the destruction of the First Temple in order to escape the yoke of the Babylonians, and that, on account of their well-being in early times, they refused to heed the call of Ezra to return to Palestine after the restoration, for which refusal he cursed them. They retaliated by deciding not to call any of their children by the name of Ezra. Our author assumes the early arrival of the Jews into Yemen, and thought that he found support for that claim by discovering epitaphs on tombstones in the cemetery at Aden which bear such dates as the years 28 and 63 of the Seleucid era, corresponding to the years 251 and 286 B.C.E. His finds, however, were declared doubtful by many Jewish scholars, as it is surmised that the dates on the epitaphs are not complete but that one or more figures which indicated a much later date were obliterated.

The second volume deals with the life of the Jews in India, Singapore, Java, Australia, and New Zealand. These travels occupied Sapir more than three years, for he had little facilities for travel in those days, and he spent months in leading centers of India, such as Bombay and Calcutta, and similarly in the Australian cities. His account of the old and new Jewish settlements in India and Australia is full and detailed. Of special interest are his descriptions of the Benē Israel, a Jewish sect in India and of the communities of white and black Jews in Cochin, in Southern India and in the Malabar province. The first who live around Bombay and whose color is dark brown were thought by many to be descendants of Hindus who at one time had embraced Judaism. For a long time, their Judaism was defective, for they observed little, forgot the Hebrew language, and had no copies of the Bible or other religious books. During the last century, however, the Babylonian and European Jews who settled in India, interested themselves in their less fortunate brethren and restored them to a complete practice of Judaism. In Sapir's time, they already had synagogues, scrolls of the law, and schools for their children. Our author's belief is that the Benē Israel are descendants of Jews who settled in India in very early times, but due to their isolation they lost much of their Judaism though preserving their identity.

The Jews of Cochin, he tells us, settled there around the end of the fourth century. They possess copper tablets on which there are engraved the privileges granted them by the king of the country at the time. They also had a tradition that at one time they had their own kingdom. Of the descendants of the early settlers hardly any

remained at the time of the visit of our traveler. Almost all of the Jews consisted of the children of later immigrants from Palestine, Bagdad, Syria, Spain and other European countries. In the time of Sapir there existed also in Cochin a community of black Jews whom the white held in low esteem. These black Jews, according to the opinion of the white Jews, were the descendants of Hindu slaves owned by the Jews, who were, according to the law, proselytized and later freed. Our author, however, thinks that they were descendants of Jewish fathers and Hindu mothers. They did observe Judaism in no less a scrupulous manner than their white Jewish neighbors, and a number of them were even versed in the Talmud.

Interesting also is Sapir's account of the Jewish settlements in Australia which were new at the time. It is a fine record of the youth of a new Jewish center. Our author included in the book learned discourses on manuscripts he collected in Yemen, especially on an ancient copy of the Pentateuch which he bought and in which he found considerable differences from the text of our Pentateuch. The manuscript aroused great interest at the time and was the subject of several scholarly studies by Jewish savants. Much of the information of the *Eben Sapir* is antiquated today, yet it is still valuable as a record of the life of distant Jewries of eighty years ago.

iii. Of much inferior quality is the story of travels in Asia and Arabia by Israel Benjamin, entitled *Sefer Masa'ē Yisrael* published in 1859. Israel Benjamin, who liked to style himself Benjamin the Second, with reference to Benjamin of Tudela (Vol. I, Sec. 195), the first Jewish traveler who left a record of journeys, was a native of Rumania who undertook his journeys to the Eastern lands in the year 1846 and spent five years in the exploration of these countries. In the short preface to the book, the author tells little about himself except that the indirect cause for the journey was the loss of his money in a business venture which compelled him to leave his native city in search of a livelihood. The motive for such an adventure, he says, was the desire to visit the lands which were the scenes of great events in Jewish history as well as to find the traces of the ten lost tribes. He must have been, on the whole, poorly equipped for the role of an observant traveler, for his education was limited. He undoubtedly knew some Hebrew and also possessed a certain amount of Talmudic knowledge, but did not master either. Of the European languages, he was conversant with German, and it is in this language that he wrote an account of his travels. It was translated, because of

the information it contained, into French and later into Hebrew by David Gordon, the editor of the *ha-Maggid*. Benjamin, however, was of a daring spirit and was endowed with great courage and a hardy constitution, qualities which enabled him to sustain the hardships and hazards of travel in uncivilized countries over mountains and impassable roads.

His Asiatic journey ran from Constantinople through Smyrna to Egypt and Palestine, and thence through Syria, Armenia, Kurdistan, to Babylon and Bagdad. From there he journeyed by sea to India visiting its important cities and even ventured into Afghanistan and China, reaching as far as Canton. He then returned to Bombay and thence by sea to Arabia, whence he proceeded to Persia, and after visiting the principal cities of the Empire of the Shah, returned via Asia Minor to Constantinople.

In spite of the extent of his travels, both in space and time, his records are brief and his description of the situation of the Jews in the lands he visited are limited to the general features. He seldom gives a vivid picture of the inner life of the Jews or of the economic and social conditions in any important Jewish community or center. He was, as it seems, more interested in customs which he describes with a certain accuracy and detail, especially those of the Jews of Kurdistan, a country which he visited several times. Curiously enough, Palestine which was one of the principal objectives of the journey, occupies little space in his records. His description of Jerusalem occupies only a page and a half and is entirely devoted to recounting some topographical facts without even mentioning the existence of a Jewish community in the Holy City. Bagdad, on the other hand, seemed to have found favor in the eyes of our traveler as he describes it in six pages and gives a fair amount of information about the city proper, the life of the Jews there, their communal organization, and their peculiar religious customs. Exceptionally brief is his account of the Jews in India. He believes that the Jews known as the Benē Israel as well as the Jews of Cochin are descendants of the Ten Tribes who settled there several centuries after their exile by the Assyrians in 722 B.C.E.

In recording the stories and legends told by the people in the countries he visited, Benjamin is uncritical and on the whole accepts them at their face value. Thus he tells us that the grave of Jacob ben Asher, the author of the *Tur* (Vol. II, Sec. 57) is found near Smyrna, and though he appends a note telling us that according to authorities

he died in Spain and was buried in Toledo, he does not deny the belief of the native Jews. Again, he informs us that Queen Esther erected an edifice over the Cave of Makpelah, the burial place of the patriarchs, in Hebron, and that in Urfa in Mesopotamia you can still see the ruins of the house where Abraham was born as well as parts of the lime kiln into which he was thrown by Nimrod.

A few years later, he made a journey into Africa, visiting Egypt, Tripolis, Tunis, Algiers, and Morocco. His description of the Jews of these countries is somewhat fuller than that of the Asiatic lands and we obtain a fair picture of the life of the Jewish communities in North Africa at the beginning of the second half of the last century. On account of his interest in religious customs, he pays special attention to this phase of Jewish life and devotes a chapter to its description dwelling extensively on the prevailing superstitious practices.

Judging the itinerary of Benjamin as a whole, we can say that while it lacks completeness of detail in description and is defective in literary presentation, yet it contains much information on the life of the Jews in far corners of the earth as it was lived a century ago.

iv. Of interest is also the *Sefer ha-Masa'ot* (Book of Travels) by Joseph Judah Charni (d. 1880), who made extensive journeys in the years 1866 to 1875 through European and Asiatic Caucasus, the Crimea, and the provinces around the Caspian Sea which were included within the Russian Empire. The Jews of these countries, having lived as they did for many centuries in a state of isolation from the rest of the Jewries of the world, among barbarous warlike tribes, have in the course of time developed a peculiar type of life. They were assimilated to a large degree and adopted many customs of their neighbors, even their language. Most of the Jews of the Caucasus spoke at the time of Charni's visit a certain Tartaric dialect, and in addition, conducted themselves in many other ways like their neighbors. Like them they always carried arms, and very often quarrels and feuds ended in pitched battles. They, however, clung tenaciously to their religion which they observed with great care, but also with many peculiar ceremonies and customs of non-Jewish origin. That ignorance and superstition prevailed among the Jewish masses of these provinces goes without saying.

All these peculiarities of the life of the Caucasian Jews are faithfully reflected in the narrative of our author. He describes the life of the Jews in every important community in a detailed manner,

giving the number of Jews living in each city or town and tells of their occupations, the political conditions, and their cultural state. Charni also attempted to conduct some historical investigations to determine the antiquity of the settlement of the Jews in various localities, but, due both to the fact that documents were not preserved by the communities as well as to his poor scholarly equipment, the results were rather meager. Most of the communities to whom the traveler turned for historical information, furnished data which went back only a century before the date of inquiry.

The literary form of the itinerary is very defective. The larger part of it was not arranged for publication by the author, but was edited by Abraham Harkavy on behalf of the Society for the Promotion of Enlightenment among the Jews, from stray notes and leaves in the traveler's diary; consequently it bears the character of records jotted down in a hurry. Besides, Charni was not a master of Hebrew and often, when he could not express himself in that language, interspersed his narrative with Yiddish phrases. These were also retained by the editor, as he wanted to present the itinerary in its original form. Yet, in spite of all the defects, the book is of value, as it affords a glimpse into the peculiar life of a Jewry which was isolated for centuries.

CHAPTER XII

PHILOSOPHY, THEOLOGY, AND ETHICS

93. *INTRODUCTORY*

Jewish scholarly activity during the last century expressed itself, as we have seen heretofore, to a very large extent in the exploration of the Jewish past in all its manifold ramifications. Yet, a place was reserved for speculation and thought. That this speculation was limited primarily to the field of religious philosophy or what we would call rational theology, goes without saying. The most burning question in Jewish life, especially in that of Western Jewry was, as noted in the survey of its movements, that of adjusting Judaism in its beliefs and practices to the spiritual and intellectual conditions of the modern world. It follows, of course, that a restatement of the fundamental concepts of Judaism should have engaged the attention of many who championed such an adjustment. In addition, there was hardly any need in Jewish life for speculation of a general philosophic character. In a period when the philosophic systems of Kant, Fichte, Schelling, and Hegel dominated the entire intellectual world and were known to every intelligent Jew in their original language, there was little reason for a Jewish thinker to write a treatise intended especially for his brethren, on philosophical problems, unless it were written in Hebrew. Of such we possess a few, but on the whole they contain no original thoughts but are merely digests of the philosophies current in the larger world. Whatever individual Jews had contributed to the field of general philosophy belongs to the speculative literatures of the languages in which they were written and not to Jewish literature. We are, therefore, concerned mainly with such books which treat of specifically Jewish speculative problems, and thus we observe a line of demarcation between the Jewish Mediaeval philosophy and that of the Modern Period. The former, while it busied itself largely with the conciliation of the teachings of Judaism with the philosophy of the day, embraced also within its

sphere the discussion and elucidation of general philosophic problems, inasmuch as the information was otherwise wholly inaccessible to the Jews—such books dealing with aspects of general philosophy were as a rule written in Hebrew. Modern Jewish philosophy, on the other hand, is limited to the Jewish aspect and discusses the general problems only in their relation to the former.

Yet, were we to limit our survey to original Jewish speculative work produced during the last century, it would be rather brief, for in spite of the existing urgency for the intellectual adjustment of Judaism, only few Jewish thinkers ventured to undertake such an attempt in a systematic manner. There is, however, another aspect to Jewish philosophical literature of the Modern Period and that is the historical. The field of Jewish Mediaeval philosophy was not overlooked by the savants of the century, and many of them were engaged in its exposition and elucidation. Numerous works dealing with the teachings of that current of thought or with the characterization of the works and views of its leading men, were written by scholars and thus our knowledge of this particular expression of the Jewish genius was increased. As a result, Mediaeval Jewish philosophy was revealed to us in all its manifestations; and since all Jewish spiritual phenomena are interrelated irrespective of the time in which they took place, the thorough exploration of the Jewish thought of a former period indirectly clarified the conceptions of Judaism as a whole and brought about a better understanding of its principles even in modern times.

The origin of the speculative current in Jewish literature of the Modern Period can be traced to Mendelssohn. The thesis expounded in his "Jerusalem" (Sec. 14), that the Sinaitic revelation did not concern itself with the eternal verities based on reason but only with historical truths and laws, served as a starting point to diverse trends in reflection.

The conclusion drawn by Mendelssohn from his thesis that Judaism enjoins no dogmas, but is compatible with the metaphysical principles of any rational philosophy gave an impetus to subsequent thinkers to develop this line of thought and to prove that the content of Judaism, as far as its beliefs are concerned, is in perfect agreement with the philosophy of the day. But this formed only one aspect in the problem of adjustment of Judaism to the modern spirit. There was a more difficult one which could not be so easily reconciled and that was the law, which Mendelssohn made the main content of revelation. It was this very emphasis on the law which gave rise to a

current of thought in the opposite direction to that of Mendelssohn. The spirit of the age often expressed in a revolt against the law and the religious practices, which lead to the particularization of Jewish life, was greatly reflected in the thought of the day. However, even this tendency found support in the theories of the sage of the enlightenment, for his statement that Judaism stresses action was interpreted as mainly ethical action, while his insistence on the actual observance of the precepts of Judaism and their incumbency upon every member of the House of Israel was not only overlooked, but as said, opposed.

Thus were the ethical teachings of Judaism stressed more and more along with its exalted beliefs which corresponded to the notions of philosophy. The emphasis on these two features of Judaism in turn gradually brought about a tendency to invest Judaism with the character of universality and humanitarianism. The thinkers were no more satisfied to prove that Judaism is compatible with philosophy, but strove to demonstrate that its teachings contain the only religious principles which are applicable to all humanity. Its purpose and aim were described to be the development of the true human personality and the ideal man. Israel was duly recognized as the bearer of these lofty ideas throughout history and even a mission was ascribed to him, namely, to continue to spread this religion of humanity. The existence of the Jewish community was not considered an aim in itself, but as a means for the ultimate realization of these ideas among all nations. Consequently, the trend of Jewish religious thought during a large part of the last century assumed a centrifugal tendency gradually sublimating the content of Judaism into a system of philosophical notions and abstract ethical ideals. That this conversion of Judaism from the religion of a people whose fate and destiny it was to face an antagonistic world into the vague scheme of humanitarian ideas carried its own contradiction, inasmuch as the propounders of these theories claimed to strengthen through them the loyalty of the younger generation to the faith of their fathers, is quite evident. But the champions of these views, in their zeal for humanitarianism, overlooked the incongruity of their "exalted" conception of Judaism with the hard realities of life.

There were, of course, other thinkers who gave rise to minor currents in the Jewish thought of the day and who did not carry the universalistic tendency to such extremes. They were more moderate in their aspirations and did not claim for Judaism the role of a universal religion, but were fully satisfied with its function as the

heritage of Israel, though they too endeavored to the best of their ability to endow it with a sublime character and with philosophic verity and ethical dignity. Again, there was also an isolated attempt by a thinker, as we will see, to go to the other extreme and separate the Jewish faith entirely from philosophic thought and even place it in opposition to reason, though he too did not forego its supposed universalism and stressed its humanitarian character. Thus, the Jewish philosophy of the last century, though on the whole, overwhelmingly permeated by a spirit of universalism, contains also manifestations of different character and tendency. With these preliminary remarks, we shall proceed to survey the course of development of that thought in its diverse ways.

94. *THE RATIONALISTIC SCHOOL*

It is really difficult to speak of a school of thought in connection with the trend of Jewish reflection during the last century as there was no concerted effort on the part of the thinkers to develop a definite set of ideas in a systematic sequence. Nor were there men who succeeded in making their views and theories the basis of such a school to be completed and expanded by their successors. Even the philosophic theologians, whose works display a greater effort at completeness of thought, found no followers. Every work in the field of Jewish religious philosophy can be viewed as a phenomenon in itself which bears little relation to the works of others dealing with the same problems. The reason for such disjointedness in modern Jewish thought is primarily the fact that there was not one dominant philosophical system in the general world with which the teachings of Judaism were supposed to be brought into harmony, as the case was in the Middle Ages. There were a number of such systems, and each Jewish thinker either followed the thought of a particular philosopher and applied them to Judaism, or selected several salient points in diverse systems of thought and attempted to read them into the doctrines of the synagogue. On the other hand, most of these theologians did not master Jewish life with completeness and thoroughness so as to be able to make the two, the doctrines of philosophy and those of Judaism, even apparently identical. The rift was always evident and the attempted amalgamation of the different elements was, on the whole, a forced one. Under such circumstances, no systems or schools could be developed and each philosophic author began his work anew.

Yet in spite of this disjointedness and isolation which characterize modern Jewish religious thought, there is still a common trait in all these attempts at Jewish philosophizing which is especially noted in the less complete works where no systems of thought are developed, and that is their rationalistic tendency. This desire to prove the compatibility of Judaism with the principles of reason, as taught by the philosophies followed by the authors, is the leading motive of all of them in spite of their otherwise diverse characters. It is in this wide connotation that we employ the term "school" as a means of grouping together a number of thinkers who lived in different lands and wrote in different languages.

The earliest of these rationalists was the physician, Saul Ascher (d. 1822), who in his work, *Leviathan*, published in 1792, expounded his philosophic conception of Judaism. In this work he was the first to express the spirit of revolt against the thesis of Mendelssohn that the law was the main subject of revelation. To him the essence of Judaism consists primarily in its exalted beliefs which not only agree perfectly with the principles of reason, but because of their revealed character, represent the true teaching given to all humanity. He admits that for a long time, especially since the completion of the Talmud, Judaism was expressed mainly in terms of law observance, but thinks that this was only its formal aspect and not its true essence. It is, therefore, says he, our duty to search for the spiritual kernel embodied in the revelation and develop it into a living factor.

Ascher's view, though opposing the law, does not aim at its destruction but at its reformation. As a layman, he does not outline the way of that reformation but leaves it to expert scholars and theologians. He, however, indicates the lines along which such a change in the attitude toward the Jewish law should follow. He would retain the observance of such important institutions as the Sabbath, circumcision, the festivals, and a few others. These, in his opinion, serve as the symbolic expression of the principles of belief and are of main importance. Yet, with all his rationalistic tendency, he does not exclude the dogmas of the Messiah and resurrection from his system of Jewish beliefs and lays special emphasis on the dogma of revelation at Sinai which forms the central point of his faith. He thus does not break entirely with traditional Judaism and does not empty it of its content, but differs with it in the attitude towards the law and its observance. In his opposition to the demands of the law,

he employs as a weapon the Kantian theory of the autonomy of the human will. It is impossible, says he, that it was the intention of God to reveal to the Jews laws, the rigid observance of which would limit the exercise of their own free will and thus undermine its autonomy. Consequently, the laws are only symbols of the beliefs and their external manifestation but are not the essential aspect of Judaism.

A rationalist of a different stamp, who strove to equate Judaism with reason, though in a limited and moderate way, was Issac Samuel Reggio (Sec. 73). He endeavored to carry out this task in his book *ha-Torah we ha-Pilisufiah* (Torah and Philosophy) published in 1828. The work, intended for a class of readers whose piety was still retained in its integrity and whose loyalty to tradition was not as yet shaken by doubts, has for its main purpose to prove that the study of philosophy and the sciences is not antagonistic to the Torah, but, on the contrary, strengthens and deepens real belief in the principles of the Jewish religion which are not opposed to reason. As such it resembles many of the writings produced by the writers of the movement of enlightenment which aimed to widen the intellectual horizon of the Jew. But it has also another purpose, and that is to defend the law and tradition against radical rationalists who emptied Judaism of its content. Reggio, who was a devout follower of Mendelssohn, defends the thesis of the master, namely, that the observance of the law constitutes the most important expression of Judaism and strives valiantly against those who emphasized mainly its ethical aspect. It is in this polemic against the extreme rationalists of the day that the spirit of the time is reflected, as otherwise the book echoes little of the ideas current in the intellectual Jewish circles of the period.

The work is divided into four sections, the first of which undertakes to prove that the study of philosophy is permissible from a religious point of view; the second, that it is desirable and helpful in the inculcation of a pure conception of Judaism; and the third refutes all possible arguments raised by the religious zealots against philosophy. In the fourth, the author polemizes against the radicals of the day and enunciates his own conception of the essence of Judaism. There is little new in the first three sections. In the manner of all apologists the author begins with a presentation of the arguments advanced for and against the study of philosophy and science and

quotes numerous citations from the Talmudic and post-Talmudic literature for its legitimization. He then describes the uses of philosophy, which he defines as a general term embracing both the natural sciences and speculation proper, and proves at length how each of its parts, if mastered by a pious man, will only deepen his religious conception. Like Bahya, he proves that a study of the complexity and harmony of nature conduces to a feeling of awe and respect for the creator of the world. Again, psychology and ethics help towards attaining real ethical conduct as prescribed by the Torah, for they conduce to an understanding of its moral precepts; logic and metaphysics serve as a means to purify the religious beliefs and remove from them all false notions and erroneous interpretations. His next task is to show that both the written and the oral law do not oppose reason, though he admits that a large part of the Torah is beyond the reach of human understanding and cannot be proved by its rules. How, says he, can we assume that Torah and reason are antagonistic when both were given by God to man? Would the all-wise God, who endowed man with reason, legislate laws which oppose reason which is itself His gift? He goes on to prove at length that many precepts of the Torah are in perfect consonance with the canons of reason, while those the rationality of which is not evident undoubtedly contain some hidden meaning, since they too were given by God and are intended for the welfare of the Jewish people to whom they were revealed. In all these remarks, as said, there is little originality, and they are in fact a restatement of views found in the writings of Mediaeval Jewish philosophers.

In his polemic against the radical rationalists he attacks especially two points in their theories of Judaism, namely that the Torah was given to the Jews for the sole purpose of training them to follow a pure ethical life, and the doctrine of the mission of Israel, which makes the Jewish people a medium for the revelation of religious truths to all humanity. From these premises, says Reggio, it follows that all such laws which under modern circumstances do not conduce to ethical life are abrogated, though they might have served that purpose in ancient times. Such view he considers erroneous and even dangerous to Judaism. The idea of the mission as one of the purposes of revelation he considers preposterous. How can we conceive, says he, that God should impart true knowledge to one small people and leave the rest of the world in ignorance? Is such action compatible with His goodness? He then proceeds to develop his

theory which is primarily a restatement of the Mendelssohnian view with some modifications. Leaving out much irrelevant matter, its gist is as follows:

God elected Israel because of the merit of their ancestors who showed themselves worthy of following the right way of life. This virtue they transmitted in potentiality to their children. Because of this, he revealed Himself to them and elected them as His people for their own good, but indirectly they serve as an example of emulation to the rest of humanity. In this way only can we conceive the Jewish mission. The law was given to them in order to distinguish them as a people of God, and it serves as a covenant between them and Him. The obligation of its observance rests upon every one who is within the fold of Israel irrespective whether the whole law can be rationally explained or not. Only God Himself can abrogate any part of it. He comes, therefore, to the conclusion that Judaism has only one fundamental dogma, which is the belief in the election of Israel by God and in the duty upon every Jew to observe the law. He then proceeds to obviate the objection which may be raised, namely that such a view is chauvinistic, and explains that in no way does it oppose the love of humanity, for since Jews must follow the ways of God who loves all His creatures, consequently, in the measure they are better Jews they are also better men. These views contain nothing startling, as most of them are unfolded in Mendelssohn's "Jerusalem," but their pronouncement in an age seething with extreme rationalism arouses our interest.

Works, similar in their general tendencies, are the voluminous Hebrew treatises of Marcus Baer Friedenthal, entitled *Ikrê Emunah* and *Yesod ha-Dat* (The Dogmas of Belief and The Foundation of Religion). Parts of these were also translated into German by J. R. Fürstenthal. With exceptional mental keenness, the author endeavors to interpret the concepts of Judaism and many of the precepts of the Torah in the light of the humanistic tendencies of the age. The interpretation is often forced and bears more of a homiletic than philosophic character, but it is always distinguished by a rationalistic trend of thought. He also does not neglect to frequently urge the followers of Jewish tradition to take account of the results of the philosophical and ethical studies of the time in order to reconcile them with the views of the Jewish religion.

Much theological speculation is also found in the various catechisms published by a number of educators and scholars during the first

quarter of the last century, the most important of which are the *Benē Zion* by Herz Homberg (Sec. 15), the *Yesodē Dat Mosheh* (The Foundations of the Mosaic Religion) by the grammarian and Bible exegete Ben-Zeeb, and the *Alumē Yosef* (The Sheaves of Joseph) by Jacob Joelson. They are of diverse character and reflect various degrees of rationalism, from the moderate to the extreme, but they have one trait in common which is to emphasize the ethical, humanitarian, and rational aspects of Judaism, at the expense of its practical or legal phase. Most of the catechisms stress the point that the precepts were given as a means of training the Jews for ethical conduct, and that Israel's destiny in the world is to instruct the nations in pure religious precepts. The national dogma of the Messiah was, as a rule, interpreted to mean that the people of Israel will rise to spiritual and moral heights and will help spread the ideas of love of man and human brotherhood and unity among the nations. Some, as Peter Beer and others, even reduced the fundamentals of Judaism to the following three: existence of God, love of God and love of our fellow-man, and attempted to adjust the entire complex of laws and precepts to that scheme.

However, all these works were only partial attempts to expound Judaism in the light of new ideas and doctrines, and reveal only in a general way the rationalistic tendency of Jewish speculation. But soon the trend assumed a more definite form and began to express itself in several systematic philosophic expositions of Judaism.

95. SOLOMON FORMSTECHER

The first of such works is *Die Religion des Geistes* (The Religion of the Spirit) by Solomon Formstecher (1808-1884). In it the author aimed, as he states in his introduction, to prove that Judaism is an absolute necessary phenomenon in the spiritual development of humanity. This of course presupposes first an exposition of the essence of Judaism itself, and second, its relation in the course of its development to the manifestations of the human spirit in all phases. With this aim in mind, he proceeds to explain Judaism as a part and even as the most distinctive part of the spiritual and intellectual history of humanity. The method he intends to use, he informs us, is the strictly scientific one, for Jewish theology, unlike Christian theology, which first posits dogmas and then asks reason to accept them, is entirely based on human reason and is open to free judgment inviting it to test the truth of its principles. Judaism, continues the

author, repeating the Mendelssohnian theories, knows of no duty to believe, nor does it acknowledge any teachings as true, if it contradicts reason, merely on the basis of having been communicated by divine authority. In it religious truth is consonant with reason, and authority does not prevail in such matters. Its belief is limited to historical facts and events but does not include dogmas. The author is, of course, aware that this pure rational character of the Jewish religion was not always evident in its manifestations throughout history, but he claims that we must distinguish between its essence or Judaism as an idea, and its appearance or Judaism as a phenomenon. As the latter, it is often covered with a crust of irrationalism and authoritative customs and laws, but as the former it is in perfect consonance with reason. His interest lies, of course, mainly in the presentation of Judaism as an idea, as an integral part of the spirit of humanity.

For this purpose, however, we must first possess a clear conception of the world, God, nature, and the human spirit in general; in brief, we must have a speculative foundation before we can integrate the essence of Judaism with the rest of the stirrings and ideals of man. Formstecher, therefore, begins his exposition of Judaism with a statement of his metaphysical views which are in reality a modification of those of Schelling, and like his, have a pantheistic substratum.

The world, says our author, is perceived by us through our sensations as a manifold, as a series of constantly changing phenomena in time and space, but being itself cannot change for it cannot become non-being. We must, therefore, conclude that behind these changing phenomena there is one constant of which the world in its infinite appearances is only the garment of its essence. This constant is the unperceivable world-soul which manifests itself by the activity of its numerous forces in all the phenomena of the perceivable world. However, neither the essence nor the activity of the world-soul is exhausted by these manifestations, for it contains more in its totality than the universe which is an incarnation of only a number of its forces. Man is the highest force-manifestation of that soul inasmuch as he, unlike all other manifestations, possesses self-knowledge and self-consciousness and even considers himself self-determined. And since man who is only a manifestation of one force of the world-soul possesses these attributes, we must of course posit them as belonging also to the world-soul, from which it follows that it is not only a physical principle which brings forth the world of nature, but also

a self-conscious and self-determined free spirit—in other words, God. God is independent of the phenomena, self-conscious and free and would exist even if all phenomena of the world would disappear. Yet the world must not be considered as something beside God but as an unveiling of some of His attributes. The world must be limited to some of His attributes, for all of them cannot be conceived by man since His essence is not exhausted by the manifestation of the world. This act of manifestation again must be thought of as a free act, for God would have existed also even if He had not manifested Himself in the world or created it. The questions why did God manifest Himself in the world or why did He create such a world and not any other, or whether there was a period in which God existed without a world, must forever remain unanswered, and man must be satisfied with the limitations placed upon the capacity of his knowledge. Formstecher thus manages to turn the world-soul of Schelling with the conception of which he started into a God-concept which preserves the principal traditional attributes, namely independence from the world and creation, though in a greatly modified form.

The totality of the forces of God which are unveiled in the world express themselves in two phases or two kinds of life. As a whole, they represent the universal life but when embodied in only a part of the world—the individual. Since the world is a large organism composed of numerous parts which in turn are smaller organisms likewise divided into parts, it follows that each part whether large or small, partakes in both the universal and the individual life. The participation in the first is manifested by the effort displayed by each organism to preserve the species, and the sharing in the second by the impulse towards self-preservation noted in every individual. We observe that these efforts follow in all phenomena a certain regular sequence, and we call this regularity of sequence a law, or a law of life and existence. As far as our observation is concerned the law is expressed under the aspect of necessity, but as far as God is concerned, it is a free act of His will. The sum of all phenomena in the world, which move and develop according to the laws we formulated as abstractions from our sensations and observation, we call nature. But when we observe an individual who does not observe the laws of nature and demonstrates activities which oppose the laws of the preservation of the species and the self, we must call such activity freedom. This freedom we note in man and we denominate

it spirit. We thus have in man a manifestation of two divine forces: of nature, inasmuch as he is a part of the physical world, and of spirit, since he is able to act with freedom. These two forces, though both expressions of the divine, are opposed to each other. Nature is a complete thing, acting under the necessity of law, while spirit is endless in its strivings and is free.

Spirit, which is revealed in man, manifests itself also in two aspects of life, universal and individual. The first aspect is expressed by man's recognition of the external world in its regularity of activity, which recognition is embodied in the science of physics, the second is expressed in his reflection upon and in regulation of his inner life embodied in the sciences of logic and ethics. Logic expresses only partly the individual life of man, for it is a means of judging knowledge both of the world and of himself, but ethics concerns itself primarily with that life, and its laws are outside of the sphere of nature, expressing a force of a different type. Logic is regulated by means of reason which is a capacity of man's spirit to compare his perceptions of phenomena with certain concepts inherent in him and determine whether they correspond and are true or, on the other hand, they do not correspond and are false. The function of reason then is to judge and test phenomena but it cannot create anything. In ethics, however, man becomes conscious of an ideal of conduct and activity which we call good, as well as of the contents or the object of that ideal. This consciousness cannot come from reason nor can the contents of that ideal be created by it. It is a manifestation of the force of God in man, and is usually called revelation. This revelation, expressed anthropomorphically, is represented as information coming to man from the outside, but in reality it is within the soul of man. This revelation changes the entire life of man, for when he becomes conscious of his spirit, there arises a conflict in him between that part which is subject to nature and the one dominated by spirit. It is then that the terms good and bad can be attributed to his actions and they can even be spoken of as sinful and virtuous. The conflict in man between nature and spirit practically supplies the greater part of the spiritual life, both of the individual and of the race as a whole. It revealed itself in various forms in the history of humanity, and it can be said that human history was mainly expressed in the striving of man to free himself from the subjection to nature and to find a way to freedom. Complete freedom, however, cannot be attained by man, for he is physi-

cally a part of nature. The purpose of human life consists then in a reconciliation between nature and spirit. In its perfect form, nature is ennobled by spirit and bears its imprints. To the realization of this ideal of life, revelation serves as a means. Knowing now the essence of revelation in general outline, the next step is to follow its development through history and its manifestation in various aspects.

Revelation as a force of God in man is undoubtedly as complete as nature, but just as the latter underwent a process of development in its realization, so did the former. We are, therefore, to distinguish between a potential revelation and an actual. The first is the pre-historical, the beginnings of which cannot be determined; the second is the historical which, as an appearance, is limited by time and space. This historical revelation was realized in a number of degrees. Its lowest form is nature worship in the simplest way when every part of nature is deified, as in Fetishism. From that stage it ascended to the adoration of natural forces and then still higher. In all these gradations, there is the impulse towards the realization of the ideal of the universal life of man, his relation to nature, his consciousness and conception of it, and its relation to him. A different type of revelation, in which the development and perfection of the individual life of man constituted the ideal, was realized in a part of the human race. This revelation also unfolded itself in various forms.

Both types of revelation developed, as said, gradually. When a group of men become conscious of a spiritual ideal and become convinced that this ideal is different than the surrounding reality, and furthermore strive to realize it in life, religion is born. Religion then is the knowledge within a certain society of the ideal of life, together with a concerted effort on their part to realize it. Of such religions, there are really only two—paganism and Judaism. The first strives to the realization of the spirit in life in its universal aspect, the second in its individual. The first represents natural worship in its manifold forms, the second that of the spirit; consequently, the former can never divest itself from subjection to nature, while the latter strives to realize the ideal of freedom. The God of paganism is the God of nature, and as a result He is not free and is subjected to fate which is only a symbolic expression for the necessity reigning in nature. The God of Judaism, on the other hand, is a God of spirit, and is independent and free. The creation of the

world by the former is limited by the eternal existence of primal matter, while that of the latter is unhemmed. Moreover, paganism, in spite of its coming into the consciousness of the universal life, is always limited in its scope and can never become a universal religion, for it is colored by local natural conditions, while Judaism, the God of which is independent of nature, strives to realize the perfection of the spirit of not only of a part of humanity, but of the human race as a whole. It possesses, therefore, the capacity of becoming a universal religion.

We have thus arrived at an outline of Judaism in its general features as the higher manifestation in man of the divine force revealed as spirit, and our author proceeds to unfold before us its peculiar characteristics and particular content. Judaism differs from the other religions in its source and content as well as in the general characteristics mentioned. The source of all religion is an historical revelation. But the term *historical* does not connote a beginning at a definite chronological moment, since it is a revelation of the power of the Absolute in man. Yet we may speak of its beginning, when a group of men become conscious of the various religious elements which then become an active factor in the folk-life and a bond of unity. The prophet is the one who brings about the change from the unorganized mass of religious feelings into a concrete phenomenon. The prophet precedes all men in this knowledge of the divine, and becomes the bearer of God's spiritual force which is manifested in him not through reason but through immediate intuition. When the ideal becomes clearer and the human spirit begins to reflect upon his relation to God, prophecy ceases, and its place is taken by the sacred Scriptures and by sacred tradition which embody the words of the prophet. We have thus three sources of religion: revelation in man, which gives the object of religion, namely the ideal of the good; prophecy, by means of which the one who is not fully conscious of religious truth becomes conscious of it; and sacred Scriptures and tradition which preserve the truth for future generations. So much for the sources of religion. As for the content, it consists of teachings about God who is the ideal placed before man in revelation and his relation to the world, and of teachings about the world and its relation to God. The first is subdivided into doctrines about the attributes of God, creation of the world, and providence. The second embraces the subjects of nature, angels, and man, both as a part of nature and as a bearer of the spirit. It is then in the light

of these definitions that Formstecher attempts to describe the content of Judaism and thus elucidate its character.

Judaism, claims our author, knows no definite beginning of revelation. It attributed its manifestations even to pre-Mosaic times, for not only was Abraham considered a prophet, but other people were also endowed with this quality. From its point of view, man was in possession of the knowledge of God very early. The fact that the Bible relates of the punishment by God of Sodom and Gomorrah proves that they were supposed to have a knowledge of right conduct, for otherwise they could not have been punished. The Mosaic revelation must then be considered merely as the establishment of a covenant between God and Israel, or as the point when divine teachings entered as a definite factor into the life of the people. Moses is considered the greatest prophet because he placed Judaism in definite opposition to paganism by his establishment of a theocratic state, but there were prophets before him and also after him.

Prophecy continued for a long time in Israel as the organ of divine revelation and acted as an educating force of the human spirit. It is only when the theocratic state was destroyed and Israel, in exile, came in direct contact with paganism that prophecy ceased and reflection embodied in tradition took place.

Prophecy was accompanied by ecstasy, and as such it manifested itself both in paganism and Judaism, but with great differences. The pagan prophets were subjected to nature, their ecstasy was more of a mania, and their prophecy was performed by divination and natural signs. Not so the prophets of Israel; they were free and their prophecy was purely spiritual, a pronouncement of the word of God.

The place of prophecy, as said, was taken later by Scripture and tradition, but in Israel neither Scripture nor tradition denoted cessation of progress. The scholar took the place of the prophet, and he opposed the priest who was inclined to conservatism and carried on the striving for spiritual freedom. Through his interpretation of the Scriptures to conform to conditions of time and place, he vivified the dead letter into the living word of God. The situation was different in paganism where tradition was conservative and lacked the conscious striving. Judaism is thus distinguished from other religions by the character of its sources.

As to its content it is totally different from that of paganism. First as to the God conception. The God of Judaism is a concrete

unity, who stands over and above nature entirely separated from it, a purely spiritual Being, while the God of paganism is never separated from nature which is His emanation. His unity is merely an abstraction of the manifold of the world. The highest degree which a pagan religion can attain is physical monotheism, while that of Judaism is ethical monotheism. From this conception results, of course, the difference regarding the relation of God to the world. Judaism teaches that the world is His manifestation and His creation, while paganism either identifies the two, making the world an emanation of God or posits a dualism by assuming eternal existence of matter beside God. It follows from such views that the God of Judaism is a free agent, while that of paganism in all its forms, even in the philosophic, is always subjected to some limitation in one form or another.

This spirituality of Judaism is manifest also in its teachings concerning the relation of the world and man to God—according to which nature is the handiwork of God and subject to His power, not identified with Him nor an opposing force; man is created by God in His image by a free act and does not originate, as paganism teaches, through the fall of a god, a view which endows man with original sin. Paganism, viewing man as a part of nature, subjects him to conditions of climate and limitations of the land wherein he dwells, and as a result, the folk-life of a group is particularized and the concept of humanity could never arise in it. This particularization is strengthened by the idea of many gods, which make each god or group of gods select his or their special people. Not so in Judaism; God is the God of the entire world and the entire human race and serves as the ideal of universal brotherhood, even if this ideal is not always actualized in the life of the people. The goal to which Judaism is striving is the realization of the kingdom of God for all men. Our author is aware of Jewish particularism as embodied in the ceremonies and precepts, but he considers it merely a means of defense against paganism. To prove the universalism of Judaism, he points to the fact that the Jews are not rooted in a certain soil, but can live and thrive in the entire world, and considers their religious ideas the only bond.

The spirituality of Judaism is further manifested in its conception of the future of man and his destiny. In contradistinction to paganism, pure Judaism does not picture any form of life in the hereafter, for since the human soul is a reflection of God, it cannot, like Him,

be described, and only its mere continuation can be asserted. All eschatological teachings in later Judaism are considered by our author a result of the influences of paganism, which were incorporated in its doctrines only after the Jews came in contact with other nations.

The concepts of human conduct and the destiny of humanity as evolved by Judaism display their spirituality in a still clearer way. The pagan ideal of morality is that man should ultimately be identified with God, and since nature is God, man must live in accordance with nature and strive to perfect and improve it. Morality is then connected with art and aesthetics. Judaism says: "Be like God and follow His way." Nature does not need any perfection and improvement; it is man who needs perfection. When Judaism speaks of man's coming nearer to God, it does not imply an actual nearness bringing to an ultimate mystical unity with Him as some of the views of paganism assert, but merely the realization of high ethical ideas in life.

For this reason the ceremonies in Judaism bear no mysterious character as in other religions but are merely means of ennobling the character of man. Even the sacrifices expressed only the thankfulness of man, in a time when such expression was deemed necessary by the Jew. Similarly, it holds itself far from mysticism in its view of evil and in its Messianic conception. To Judaism evil is only relative, for nature and spirit are both manifestations of God who is above both, and nature is also divine and becomes evil only when it attempts to subject the spirit. In paganism, nature and God are inherently connected and inasmuch as evil is contained in nature, evil becomes absolute. The latter, therefore, strove during history to redemption from evil which it pictured by the future triumph of the principle of good over that of evil and the Messiah was conceived as a God incarnate. In Judaism the Messiah is not a God but a man who will realize the highest human ethical ideals. We thus see by surveying the content of the teachings of Judaism in accordance with these ideas that it is a manifestation of the spirit, free from all subjection to nature, striving towards human ethical perfection.

This exposition is followed by a lengthy philosophical construction of the history of Judaism according to a scheme of gradual development of rationalism within Israel. The author divides the entire history into three periods, the first of which he calls one of objectivity during which the Jews were passive, mere recipients of divine knowledge imparted to them by the prophets without being fully

conscious of their own spirit. It ended with the exile and was followed by a long period divided into two epochs, one of subjective objectivity and the other of objective subjectivity. In the first of these epochs which stretched from the time of Ezra to the redaction of the Talmud, reason had already made its appearance in Judaism and became an important factor in life, but the mass of religious knowledge was still considered as received from without and belief in external inspiration was prevalent. In the second, covering the span of time from the redaction of the Talmud to Mendelssohn, reason and reflection predominated, but the forms of spiritual life were still thought objective, i.e. posited as regulated by an external authority. Then came the subjective period, from Mendelssohn on, when the human ego considers itself no more as a passive object but as an active subject. Thus, Formstecher endeavors to see in Judaism a gradual development of the spirit of man striving towards full realization of free ethical activity and rational perfection. It is unnecessary to go into the details of such an abstract construction of the history of Judaism, which neglects the real facts of history and all social and psychological factors. We shall only touch upon the theory of the mission of Israel which our author deduces as a result of his historical scheme.

This mission consists in educating humanity towards a greater and freer activity of the spirit by gradually spreading the spiritual and subjective teachings of Judaism among the nations who are under the sway of the spirit of paganism. This mission was to a degree accomplished through the agency of Christianity and Islam which have arisen out of Judaism. But inasmuch as these two great religions were in the course of their development amalgamated with pagan elements, Judaism has still to fulfill its function. The problem then arises how should we adjust Jewish life to a modern environment, so that Judaism should become a potent factor in the training of humanity? The answer of Formstecher is that Jewish life must drop its particularistic form, and that the Jews must participate in all cultural and intellectual activities of the nations. The ceremonies and precepts are viewed by our author, as said, merely as a defense against the spirit of paganism, and were only necessary in order to preserve the people who were destined to be the bearers of the spirit. In modern times, however, especially in Germany, the author thinks they have lost their usefulness, for in a free folk-life, Judaism can develop and carry out its mission even when clinging only to its

purely ethical essence. With this naïve optimistic belief, the author closes his book.

That this system of Formstecher is too abstract, forced upon Judaism from an externally conceived philosophic scheme and does not express its true essence, is quite evident. It not only disregards all conditions of life and history, but is even contradictory in itself, for it is difficult to see how the author can reconcile the election of Israel as the special bearer of the spirit with his semi-pantheistic conception of God, unless he attributes to Him a personality, which assumption is excluded by the author's definition of God. Still, as a systematic attempt to reconcile Judaism with the idealistic philosophy of the last century, Formstecher's exposition is not only interesting but intellectually stimulating.

96. SAMUEL HIRSCH

Much more conservative and closer to Jewish tradition is the second systematic philosophical theologian of that time, Samuel Hirsch (1809-1889). His treatise *Die Religionsphilosophie der Juden* which appeared in 1842, forms the first volume of a greater work of several volumes which he named *Das System der religiösen Anschauung der Juden und sein Verhältniss zum Heidenthum, Christenthum und zur Absoluten Philosophie* (A System of the Religious View of the Jews and its Relation to Paganism, Christianity, and to Absolute Philosophy). The volume, however, was also the last, for the others never appeared. In this work the author only outlines the fundamental principles of Judaism insofar as they manifest themselves in the Scriptures, in the revelation at Sinai, in their opposition to paganism both in its religious and philosophic aspects, and to Christianity. He does not touch, however, on the development of Judaism through history nor on its relation to modern philosophic ideas both of which he reserved for the following parts of the system, which, as said, were never published.

Hirsch is usually described as a Hegelian. This description, though, applies more to the external form in which his thoughts are expressed and to a number of his important views, than to the very essence of his conception of Judaism. In this he stands almost entirely on traditional ground. It is true that he agrees with Hegel in the view that the development of the spirit consists mainly in the progress of man towards the full consciousness of his freedom, and further that the religious life is to be interpreted as the realization of

that freedom. But on the other hand, Hirsch diverges greatly from him in the basic concepts of religion. The God of our author is not the vague Absolute of Hegel who has no existence outside the world in which He is continually realizing Himself. Nor is He the God of Formstecher who has existence beyond the world and yet is never separated from it. The God of Hirsch is distinct from the world, a free personality; He is all-powerful and His will is eternal. Again, unlike Formstecher, our theologian endows revelation and prophecy with real meaning considering them as actual events in the life of the people and of those select individuals called prophets, and he does not sublimate them like the former into psychological phenomena arising from an inner urge.

The Scriptures to him, though he interprets them often in forced allegorical and symbolical manner, express real truths. Moreover, he finds much of that truth also expressed in Talmudic and Midrashic literature from which he quotes hundreds of passages in his work and interprets them in the same manner.

Hirsch is a rationalist and repeats frequently that the Jew has no belief without reason, still he does not attempt, at least in this work, to reconcile the Jewish religious conceptions with the principles of the absolute or idealistic philosophy of which he was a follower. Most likely he reserved this for the later volumes. However, whether he would have effected that reconciliation or not, the fact is that in the work before us these conceptions are expressed as the basis of the Jewish religious view and its manifestation in the life of the people. He thus stands near to Jewish tradition in spirit, though in practical life he was in the camp of the radical reformers. It is also because of his spiritual nearness to tradition that he, more than any other thinker in that camp, saw clearly the nature of Judaism. With all his insistence on equating its content with mere ethical teaching, he did not fail to perceive that Judaism is more than a confession or an ethical system. He admitted that the Jews form a nationality, though he immediately qualified it, a unique one, a spiritual one which has nothing to do with political and state matters.¹ But the mere application of the term nationality to the Jews marks him as heterodox in his camp. We shall, however, see that he was heterodox also in still other matters.

The particular characteristic of Hirsch's theological system consists more in the development of his theses than in the theses themselves,

¹ Preface to the "System." pp. viii, ix.

and in this is also expressed his Hegelianism. In contradistinction to other theologians who began with a definition of God, he makes man his starting point. We, he says, have interest in ascertaining the essence of religion, but before we can proceed further along the line of inquiry, a question arises, 'who are we?' or in other words, what is the essence of man who is interested in religion? This essence he finds in the concept of the I, namely in the fact that man is fully conscious of his ego as an entity distinct from all objects around him. The concept, however, contains more than that. It not only connotes distinction but also freedom. Man feels himself free, and it is this sense of freedom which makes man what he is and forms his essence. Still this sense taken by itself is empty of meaning and has to be filled with content, for though it seems that man received freedom as a gift from nature in distinction from other animals, yet it cannot be a natural thing, for freedom and nature are opposed to each other. Man then, must make himself free not only in thought but in reality as well, namely, in actual life. Real freedom is expressed in living every moment of our lives as free beings and in this consists, according to our author, also the religious life which is no other than eternal realization of freedom. Our theologian finds these very ideas expressed in the first chapter of Genesis in the passages where the creation of man is described. He elicits them by the method of allegoric and symbolic interpretation.

Hirsch is quite aware that religion must possess another element besides freedom and that is man's relation to God. But of a relation to God as is generally understood by that term, says he, we can hardly speak for such is inconceivable since God is above all human relations. It must, therefore, be found in that very same concept of freedom. This freedom man feels he did not create himself but found it within him as a gift of a Being who is above all. This Being is God whom man recognizes as the principle of his freedom. It thus follows that the more man realizes his own freedom in life, the clearer he conceives his relation to God as the source of that freedom.

This realization of freedom in human life and the consequent clearer conception of God is effected by means of a struggle in the soul of man. The very conception of freedom implies choice between two ways, that of virtue and that of sin. Sin then becomes a necessary ingredient in freedom, but only as a possibility and not as a reality. Our author thus differs with Hegel who considers sin a stage

in human progress. This emphasis upon sin as a possibility constitutes, according to him, a fundamental teaching of Judaism, for it posits that man was given the possibility of sinning in order that his piety might be realized in a free way. In this free doing of good, man becomes more conscious of God, for the concrete knowledge of God consists not so much in recognizing Him as a Being outside of the world, as in the cognition that God as a free Being is the source of His own freedom and that man is the image of God. It is then that the human will corresponds with that of God and man's life becomes divine.

Our author finds the history of human struggle towards freedom and towards a religious life embodied in the story of the fall of man as given in Genesis, Chs. II, III. He says that this story can be considered a myth only in the sense that it tells of the inner life of the soul in the form of a supernatural tale, but its truth is evident. Allegorizing it and following the main features of the story of the fall he finds that sin consists in breaking down the limits of freedom, namely that man subjects himself to nature and follows his passions. This is symbolized by Eve's action in eating the forbidden fruit to which she was attracted by its beautiful sight. Sin, however, does not bring happiness, and hence the sense of nakedness which, according to the Bible, Adam and Eve felt after eating of the tree of knowledge. But this dissatisfaction which often results in a sense of guilt or remorse does not always lead to real ethical life. On the contrary, it is often the cause of further sin. Man, wishing to exculpate himself, denies freedom altogether and pleads necessity as an excuse for sinning. An echo of this human tendency our theologian finds in the plea of Eve that she was persuaded by the serpent to transgress the command of God. In other words, man first pleads weakness for his sins, but later he comes to recognize that he must sin by necessity, for he acknowledges himself a part of nature regulated by fixed laws.

This view is, according to our author, the origin of paganism. In it, man deifies nature, sensuality becomes dominant and all powerful, and man only a slave of his passions and of nature, who can never rise to the height of spiritual development. Paganism, however, is not an accident in human history, nor is it the result of priestcraft as the rationalists of the eighteenth century asserted. It is a phase in the human struggle towards the realization of freedom but it does not bring man nearer to his aim. Judaism, on the other hand,

posits man as a free agent, able to withstand both the wiles of man and the lure of nature. Our author then launches upon a long exposition of the manifestations of paganism in history in its various phases from Fetishism to the religions of Greece and Rome, and even to pagan philosophy. This exposition occupies several hundred pages and is distinguished by its scholarly presentation of facts and ideas. Without going into details, we may briefly say that its results lead to the view that all these manifestations have one thing in common, that the pagan religiosity was mainly a passive one and that man in heathenism never rose to spiritual morality. Such attainment can be possible only when man conceives God not only as a creator but also as a father, teacher, and prototype of conduct. This conception is embodied in Judaism, and to the characterization of its essence as reflected in the Scriptures, the author devotes several long chapters.

The origin of Judaism can be traced to Abraham. It was he who opened a new period in human spiritual history. Still, in the first stage of his religious development, there cannot be discerned any special revelation of God, for every man has the means to search for God. In his own life, man can discern the hand of God and he can come to the conclusion that he is destined for freedom and that God intended him for that purpose. In that stage Abraham represents only the ideal type of man who realizes his striving, for when he is revealed to us in the Scriptures, he already knows God. It is in his further development and ultimate attainment of absolute religiosity and perfection that the direct hand of God or His revelation becomes evident.

The life of Abraham, as directed by the hand of God, presents several epochs. The first was that of extensive religiosity. He was told to leave his native land and migrate to Canaan to spread the knowledge of God. His efforts met with little success; his preaching brought few converts, and even those that followed him did not fully grasp the idea that man is destined by God to a complete life of freedom. At that moment, he heard in his inner soul the voice of God which told him that all is not lost, that he will become the father of a new race which will carry on his ideals and realize them in life. This incident is interpreted by our author to mean that Abraham had entered upon a new epoch in his life. Henceforth, he was to train his own children to follow the ways of God by acting as an example to them. It is only then that he was promised that

he will become a father of nations which meant that he was to assume the greater mission to teach all mankind. This intensive religiosity was inculcated in Abraham by a series of trials all of which were intended to bring him nearer to perfection and to his destination. With the last trial, that of the sacrifice of Isaac, Abraham reached the highest stage, that of absolute religion. That act which indicates an ability to subordinate all demands of nature to the service of God, inasmuch as he was ready to sacrifice his own son at His behest, is the symbol of complete freedom. It marked Abraham's readiness to devote his life to truth and freedom in total independence of the dominance of nature. He thus emerged completely from paganism and set an ideal of absolute religiosity for humanity by laying the foundation of Judaism as an opposing force to paganism, which aims to train men in the realization of freedom in their lives.

This training of humanity could not, of course, be accomplished without a people devoted to the inculcation of that ideal, and the children of Abraham were chosen for that purpose. But before they could enter upon their destiny, they themselves had to be trained in absolute religiosity. This training was accomplished both by the sojourn of the children of Israel in Egypt and by their miraculous redemption. The first was only a means to arouse in them the striving for freedom while the real religious education of the people of Israel began with the redemption.

The term miraculous, as applied to the redemption, is used by our author advisedly, for in spite of his rationalism, he believes in miracles. It is his view that not only are miracles possible but even necessary. Such belief is derived by him from the concept of freedom. If man, says he, who is a part of nature, can by means of his freedom overcome its laws and act freely in spite of them, it follows that God who is absolutely free can certainly, if he so wills, disturb, at certain moments, the laws of nature without at the same time upsetting their permanent stability. That such miracles occur rarely is, of course, understood. Our theologian is inclined to accept only those miracles of the Bible which affected the entire people, but those which concerned individuals he considers only inner personal experiences. To the objection that may arise against the occurrence of miracles from the fact of their absence in the present, Hirsch replies, first, that they are unnecessary as the effects produced by them at the time of the Exodus are still with us today, and religious development can proceed in a natural course; second, that we have

one permanent miracle, the existence of the Jews. According to all laws of nature and history, the Jews should have disappeared, but they do exist, and in this can be seen the hand of God.

The miracles, of which the Holy Scriptures tell, were displayed to the people of Israel, with the aim to inculcate in their hearts the teaching that man is not subject to nature. It is this teaching which they were to realize in their own life and also to impart to the rest of humanity. And since the miracles were not mere demonstrations of God's power, but a means of instruction, they were organically connected and harmoniously coordinated. Our author devotes considerable space to the systematization of the miracles and to the explanation of their inner meaning and purpose.

Another means for both the inculcation of religious teachings in Israel and its preservation in their hearts during a large part of their history, was prophecy. Prophecy, says Hirsch, is not philosophy, for philosophy only systematizes the data of consciousness, while prophecy creates something new. It is also not poetry, for the latter, though it may contain truth is not directly connected with life, while the former deals with realities. It is also not the mere voice of conscience, for the prophet feels that the truth which he proclaims came to him not from his inner soul but from God. It is true that from a subjective point of view prophecy is a form of concentration of the spirit of man upon religion, but it is more than that, it is a divine inspiration which brings the soul of the recipient into a state which enables it to receive supernatural sensations and the truth in its full light. The prophets then were God-inspired and the contents of the prophecy consisted first in recognizing the meaning of the miracles, namely that God and not nature rules, and that man is independent of nature and is destined to follow the way of freedom; second, in imparting that knowledge to the people of Israel and teaching them their mission. It is the prophets who preserved truth and freedom among the Jews and acted as the educators of the people to live a free ethical life. Moses was the greatest prophet inasmuch as he conceived the entire contents of religion in its true essence, and also because his teachings were intended for all time, while those of the other prophets were adapted to the conditions of their own time. In fact, they added little to the teachings which were already promulgated by Moses. All prophets, though, concentrated on the enunciation of the freedom of man and the mission of Israel. To these two, namely, miracles and prophecy, there was added the revelation

at Sinai as a more effective means in the training of Israel for his destiny. At that moment the whole people perceived the truths embodied in the miracles. Hirsch is not explicit about the revelation, whether he accepts the traditional view of the revelation as a supernatural event or conceives it in a rationalistic way, namely the rise of the entire people to spiritual heights. The latter seems to be the case. But even then there is an element of the miraculous in it that a whole people should receive such an inspiration simultaneously. From that time on, Israel went on his historical way, bearing with him the teachings of Judaism. His path, however, was not strewn with roses; he had to undergo many struggles from within and from without. The Jews themselves often fell away from God, and as often returned to Him. But in all these vicissitudes they preserved their integrity and still have their mission.

Thus, after long discussions and expositions, our theologian arrived at the end of his presentation of the fundamental character of Judaism. It can be characterized as an ethical religion teaching the rule of God in the world and the moral freedom of man. He is, of course, aware that Judaism has a well-developed system of laws which have to be interpreted in the light of this view, but little is said in this work on the subject. Hirsch turns to another subject which he treats at length, and that is Christianity, the religion which not only claims the possession of truth but of an absolute character excluding even that of Judaism. It is therefore the concern of our author to disprove this claim. He does it in detail and with a display of great historical erudition, proving that Christianity was divested by Paul of its original purely Jewish character and turned into a conglomeration of teachings both Jewish and pagan.

As a result of this deviation, says Hirsch, it follows that Judaism has still its mission to perform and that the existence of the Jews as bearers of absolute religiosity is a necessary one. The modern world, he continues, still asserts that man must sin and that he cannot escape it. Against this conception, Israel must struggle in order to prove that man can live ethically and triumph over sin. The Jews can accomplish this by their conduct in life; every son of Israel must live so that he serve as an example of the teachings of Judaism. Our theologian is convinced not only that the Jews can carry out their mission, but that they must do so, and in the concluding chapter of his work draws a glowing picture of the ideal future. When the mission will be carried out, says he, Israel will

not be distinguished from other peoples in his teachings, for all will recognize God in purity of conception and will conceive man as free and created in His image. Nor will the general life of the Jews differ from that of other nations, though, they will continue to observe their own cult which will be honored by all men. They will also be brought back by the nations to Jerusalem not for the purpose of forming a state, as state life has no value for Israel, but for the purpose of continuing the development of their national cult, the acme of all religious cults. The author does not tell us the nature of that cult as he reserved the subject for a special volume. It is interesting to note how this philosophic theologian of the Reform party in Jewry, in his endeavors to present his view of the fundamental nature of Judaism, followed closely the lines of tradition, even in its national aspirations, though he spiritualized them greatly. In this as well as in his views of miracles and revelation Hirsch differed much from his contemporary Jewish rational theologians.

97. SOLOMON LUDWIG STEINHEIM

A work permeated by a deep religious spirit, which ran contrary to the general tendency of the time to adjust the contents of Judaism to the various philosophical systems in vogue, is Solomon Ludwig Steinheim's work, *Die Offenbarung nach dem Lehrbegriff der Synagoge* (Revelation according to the Teachings of the Synagogue) in four volumes. The first volume appeared in 1835, and the second twenty years later, in 1856. The third and the fourth in 1863 and 1865 respectively. Steinheim (1789-1865) was a physician by profession but his real vocation was philosophy, science, and poetry. Being a man of wealth, he occupied himself little with the healing of the sick and devoted himself to study. His knowledge was all-embracing, and he was thoroughly conversant with all the systems of classical and modern philosophy, but above all, he was endowed with a feeling of genuine religiosity. Though not learned in Jewish lore, possessing only a slight acquaintance with the Hebrew language, and unable to read the extensive literature of his people in that tongue, he was loyal to the fundamental teachings of the Bible and was convinced of their truth, considering them the only true expression of religion. The light attitude of the Jewish youth of the day towards the religion of their fathers and the attempts made by many of the so-called spiritual leaders of the people to divest Judaism of its real religious content and transform it into a collection of

philosophical and ethical notions, emphasizing mainly its moral and humanitarian values, grieved Steinheim greatly and he therefore set forth in his work, as he tells us in his preface, to stem the tide of disbelief and initiate a return movement to the principles of Judaism.

Steinheim, though, with all his zeal for the spread of the beliefs of the only revealed religion is not orthodox even in the broad sense of the word. The law with all its multifarious precepts and injunctions occupies a secondary place in his religious scheme. In fact, he criticizes Samson Raphael Hirsch for his insistence on obedience to the law rather than on the inner belief in God,² and in his preface to the first volume, he complains of the many laws and injunctions and fences around the law which the fathers of the synagogue introduced in Judaism as a means for its preservation. These, he says, probably had value in their time but have lost their importance in modern times. He is primarily concerned with the revealed beliefs. It is the religious moment in the human consciousness which he wants to revivify and to this task his work is devoted.

Our author, though a schooled philosopher, is not systematic in the development of his thought, and, in addition, the work abounds with many long digressions of a polemic character and numerous repetitions. It is, therefore, difficult to present its content extensively, and we shall endeavor to outline only its salient points.

His starting point is that reason and religious belief not only cannot but should not be reconciled. These are two different worlds which are antagonistic to one another and yet complete each other, as both are integral parts of the human spirit and soul. However, he is confident that with the right approach to the problem and with the proper analysis of these two elements of the human soul, the outcome will be the capture of reason by faith, by which he means that reason itself will resign its right to test the truth of the principles of belief and will acknowledge them as true in spite of their contradiction to its own canons. Revolutionary as this point of view was in his own day—and probably even today—and contrary to all philosophic views of religion of the time, it yet emanated from one great philosophic system of the last century, namely that of Kant. The conclusions of Kant in his "Critique of Pure Reason" served Steinheim as the key to his religious thought, for he was a Kantian in his philosophy.

As is well known, Kant by his criticism, dethroned reason from

² *Die Offenbarung*, Vol. II, p. 36.

its position as sole judge of all matters whether they take place within human sense experience or outside of it, and limited it to the function of a unifier and systematizer of the data of experience into the highest concepts. As such, it cannot go beyond the phenomenal world, and since we assume the existence of things in themselves of which we know nothing, it follows that there is a province of existence over which reason has no judgment. The fundamental beliefs in God, freedom of the will, creation, and immortality of the soul are beyond experience, and consequently are also beyond the jurisdiction of reason. Kant thus demolished all attempts that were made up to his time of basing these beliefs on rational grounds, but he also demolished all attempts to disprove them by arguments borrowed from reason. He had, however, done more than that for religion. Feeling that without these beliefs, human life would lose its meaning and dignity, and that they are absolutely necessary for its fullness and exaltedness, he posited in his "Critique of Practical Reason" the existence of God, freedom, and immortality as postulates of the moral law, which, as he says, are certain, though they cannot be proved by the canons of reason. In his *Vorlesungen über die philosophische Religionslehre* he also defends *creatio ex nihilo*. It is the limitation of the power of reason and the necessity of fundamental beliefs in human life advanced by Kant that were seized upon by Steinheim and laid as the cornerstone of his system which makes religious beliefs independent of the moral law but a part of experience, though not of the sensuous type, and thus he expanded his theory beyond the limits set by Kant.

These beliefs, says Steinheim, were not evolved by reason nor could they ever have been evolved by it, for they came to man from without, namely by revelation from God, and God would not have revealed to man things that he could have attained by his own reason. And yet the certainty of these beliefs which are not rational knowledge is not less than the results of mathematical reasoning, for man must have a certain conviction by means of which it is possible for him to evolve a general judgment of what is good, right and fit for all occasions, and vice versa of what is bad, low, and undignified. With this bold statement about revealed religion and its certainty, Steinheim opens his work and devotes the rest of it to the description of its characteristics, its differentiation from non-revealed religion, its relation to philosophy, and finally its content.

The main characteristics of revealed religion, says Steinheim, are

first, that it is truthful and given by God for the welfare of men that they may determine their relation to Him; second, that it has a beginning in time. This, however, does not mean that it also possesses an inner development as all things which began at a certain moment in history. On the contrary, having emanated from God, its truths were given complete, and little could be added to them. We can, however, speak of its development in a particular way, namely the gradual adjustment of those to whom it was revealed to its truths and principles. In this way we can discern numerous stages in the assimilation of that religion to the capabilities of its adherents, and thus speak of development within its sphere of influence.

As a bearer of these revealed truths, the people of Israel was chosen. The entrusting of these teachings by God to the particular group, believes Steinheim, is the main factor in the survival of the Jews. All other factors, as unity of race, language, and history are secondary. This factor has become especially effective since the loss of political freedom, for no other cause was as instrumental in the maintaining of the integrity of the Jewish people in the past as their revealed religion, not even the Messianic ideal. Consequently, it is the only nation-building element in the history of Israel. When we speak, says our author, of the Jews as a people, we mean by it primarily their particularity as adherents of the revealed religion and every member of this group, as long as he does not separate himself from it partakes in the great mission entrusted to Israel from the time of Abraham.⁸ The author emphasizes the positive value of this revealed religion, the heritage of Israel, in a brief but clear description. It is, he says, distinctly opposed to all other forms of religion, whether the natural or the philosophic. Its main ideas, namely those of God, creation, freedom, and immortality, though apparently supported by reason, are in reality opposed to its principles and their content is totally different from similar ideas advocated by philosophy. This difference and distinctness of the Jewish religion gave the stamina to the Jews in all ages to resist the world, and also constitutes the distinctness of their nationhood.

Such a description of the Jewish heritage involves, of course, a supposition of the necessity of a revelation and that men could not have attained the same results by their own intellectual ability, which in turn presupposes the limitation of reason on the one hand, and

⁸ Ibid., Vol. I, p. 58.

the superiority of the content of that revelation to other religious expressions on the other hand. Steinheim thus approaches his main thesis which is that the revealed religion contains truths though they are opposed to reason, while the dogmas of the non-revealed religions, though in conformity with it, are nevertheless insufficient and consequently not absolutely true. After a number of digressions wherein he polemizes against various philosophical conceptions of revelation, he posits the criterion of the truth of religious teachings. The propositions of the non-revealed human religion, says he, agree with reason and are stamped with its forms, but contain within themselves a contradiction and consequently are not true. Those of revealed religion, on the other hand, oppose the canon of reason, but are free from inner contradiction. The next step is to demonstrate the correctness of the statement and prove that the criterion holds good in its application to these two kinds of religious expressions. There arise then two problems for solution, first, to show the inability of reason to arrive at the same religious truth as revelation, and the second, the realization in history of the teachings of revelation in their distinctness from all other religious expressions of humanity.

He attempts to prove the first by analogy with physical knowledge. In this field we find that many facts of actual experience contradict the laws of reason, and were we to formulate physical laws, *a priori*, they would contradict the actual behavior of natural phenomena. He cites, for example, the phenomena of elasticity and compressibility of air which is incomprehensible from the standpoint of reason, for it cannot explain why the same quantity of matter should at one time occupy a larger space, and at another a smaller space, and yet this thing exists. In general, he says in another place, reason which is characterized by the category of necessity, cannot sufficiently elucidate the nature of real things which are all accidental, subject to actual time and space and not to their mathematical abstractions which are bare of all content. Similarly, reason cannot comprehend the content of revelation, for it is not the result of sensual experience and yet it is a necessary part of human consciousness. Steinheim turns once more to this point in his second volume where he endeavors to develop it more extensively.

From this inability of reason to grasp the truth of revelation which forms the keystone of his contention that it must have come from an external source, there follows its distinctness from other religious

expressions in history. To the enunciation of the character of that distinctness of revelation as compared with natural and philosophical religion, most of the chapters of the first volume of the book are devoted.

With great erudition and with complete mastery of the entire field of classical thought, Steinheim presents the contents of the natural religion and shows its own contradiction. In all the various forms and manifestations of the natural religion of the ancient world there is evident a dualism expressed in two aspects: first, the existence of two principles, that of the good and the bad, and second, that of God and of primal matter which is equally eternal and self-subsisting. This dualism which brought about the dominance of an unknown necessity in life and the world is the very essence of that religion, for its God was never free, as He too was subjected to necessity, nor was He ever good or potent, for the principle of evil always strove against Him and limited His power. As a consequence, that religion could not raise the life of man and exalt it, for the gods subjected to natural necessity were only little above men, and in their strife against evil, often succumbed to it. Hence, ancient mythology contains so many stories about the immorality of the gods; and, concludes our author, if moral activity did manifest itself in the ancient world, it was in spite of its pagan religion. It was revelation that first liberated man from slavery to nature and endowed him with the potentiality of becoming a moral being. Without revelation it could never have been accomplished as evidenced by the course of events in the entire ancient world outside of Judaism.

Nor do things fare better with the religion of philosophy. In spite of the development of thought, it always retained the characteristics of the pagan religion, namely the two kinds of dualism in one form or another. By not accepting the idea of "creation from nothing," philosophy left untouched the existence of eternal matter and thus limited God's power and all its religious concepts are totally different from that of revelation. This is especially evident in Leibnitz's *Theodocée* which was written by him with pious intentions. Since he did not posit "creation from nothing," God remains limited by matter, and consequently could only create the best of all possible worlds but not a good world. The same can be said of other systems of philosophy. Kant's attempt to deduce the religious ideas from the moral law forms an exception, but he was not successful, for the moral law without any motive has no meaning, but if we

attribute to it a motive, it is no more imperative law. On the contrary, the God-idea must precede any moral law and not follow it. Hence the difference in content between philosophical religion and that of revelation.

The author then proceeds to a more thorough description of the content of Judaism or the revealed religion. First of all, its teaching of the unity of God is totally different from that of philosophy and that of the higher type of natural religion. In all these various teachings of divine unity there is always an idea that God unites the manifold of the world; in other words, He is a collective unity. It is in a way more negative in character than positive, namely a Being in which contradictions of forces are reconciled. The unity of God taught by revelation, as understood by the leaders of the synagogue, connotes the existence of a unique absolute simple Being, nay, even of one endowed with individuality. At this point, our author reproaches the Mediaeval Jewish thinkers for their borrowing ideas from the philosophy of their time, but he admits that in spite of it, they enunciated the God-idea correctly.

The second important idea is that of creation. All philosophic theories about the origin of the world contain contradictions, for as long as the existence of eternal matter is posited, creation has no meaning and God's freedom is jeopardized, as He was forced to use some ready material. Nor is the other assumption of an endless series of causes free from contradiction for it opposes the law of reason that every effect must have a cause. The teaching of revelation that God created the world from nothing opposes reason but has no inner contradiction.

With creation there goes, of course, freedom of the will. This idea which is not only a concept but really a datum of our consciousness, though it was constantly upheld by the non-revealed religions and philosophy, did not attain its fulness in either. There is always an element of necessity in the philosophic formulation of freedom which destroys its essence. Even the conception of Fichte that freedom consists in the unhindered development of a thing according to its inner principles has no meaning, for all development means limitation by other things, as otherwise it would have developed endlessly. Consequently, freedom as a datum of consciousness which endows man with the ability to act by self-determination, is only a matter of revelation. It is closely connected with "creation from nothing," for spontaneous determination without a cause op-

poses, like *creatio ex nihilo* the law of causality established by reason. Only a free God could bestow upon man such a gift.

The fourth principle of revelation, that of immortality of the soul is not dealt with in such detail by our author as the other principles; he found its treatment more difficult indeed. He thinks the pagan conception, as reflected in the pictures of Hades, rather dreary and gloomy. Nor is the philosophical conception of describing immortality as a return to the world-soul and as an absorption in the "all," free from the mythical element of paganism. He, therefore, prefers the conception of immortality taught by revelation as it is based on the trust in the goodness of God.

These views then are the contents of revelation which the Jews have preserved in their purity, while the original teachings of Christianity which, as derived from Judaism were also pure, became in time diluted with elements of paganism and lost their value. The living word of God, the heritage of every Jew, must then become a vital factor in the life of every son of Israel.

In the second volume which, as said, appeared twenty years after the publication of the first and bears the title *Die Glaubenslehre der Synagoge als eine exacte Wissenschaft*, Steinheim expands the theories propounded in the first volume and also presents a sketch of the development of Judaism during Biblical times as well as an interpretation of the main teachings of the synagogue.

There is much repetition in the volume of what was stated previously, and many lengthy digressions and polemical discourses. The main theoretical addition is his emphasis upon the point that the teachings of religion, though opposed to reason, can be known with certainty in a manner similar to the one in which the natural or exact sciences are known. There are, says our author, two methods by means of which we arrive at knowledge; the mathematical which has for its object thought conceptions, and that of induction based on experience. When we apply the first method to the study of natural phenomena, contradictions result. These prove that reason is not always able to explain such phenomena. To illustrate this point, he cites a few examples. According to mathematical reasoning, a law is evolved which states that the atmosphere gradually thins in proportion to its height. From that it would follow that it should be endless, for the process of thinning can go on to infinity. Yet induction proved to us that the atmosphere ends entirely at a certain height. A second example is that when water turns to ice, it expands

and becomes lighter in weight, which is contrary to the rule of contraction and expansion of bodies through the effect of heat and cold. These and other examples, argues our author, prove that reason, attempting to explain things under the aspect of necessity, breaks down in its efforts when colliding with actual facts. For a real knowledge of nature, the method of induction is the safest. Similarly, he wants to apply the same induction to religious data. These may not be proved by reason, but they are part of human consciousness, and are thus facts. Of these data, freedom is the most certain belief in the human heart; and thus it is a fact, and we have to accept it even if philosophy does not prove it or even contradicts it. However, that freedom which is expressed in self-determination came to man through revelation, for in natural religion there was no real freedom. Here Steinheim goes on to compare the teachings of Judaism with those of natural and philosophic religions and proves the superiority of the former over the latter, inasmuch as they conduce to a real spiritual and ethical life, while the latter result in contradictions and fall short of their aim.

It was Steinheim's intention in his learned work to oppose the theories of Mendelssohn who taught that revelation was merely limited to historical data, and that human reason was capable to attain the "eternal verities," namely the existence of God, freedom, and immortality by means of its own powers. Our author aimed to revive real faith in the heart of the Jewish youth by making it a part of human spiritual experience independent of philosophy. He did not succeed in his endeavor for he exerted little influence upon his generation. This is due partly to the unsystematic presentation of his ideas and to their abstractedness, and partly to his ignoring the historical and emotional factors in religion. Still, the originality of his views, the boldness of his attempts, and the purity of his conception of the fundamental beliefs of Judaism, and his penetrating insight into the nature of philosophy which detected its limitations as a judge of all spiritual matters, make his work a worthy contribution to modern Jewish thought.

98. *MINOR REPRESENTATIVES OF JEWISH THOUGHT*

Steinheim, in spite of his passionate appeal to the Jewish youth to return to the beliefs of their forefathers, and in spite of his thorough-going criticism of the current philosophic views of religion, found no followers. His thesis that revelation, though contradictory

to reason, is yet as true as the very canons of logic and even more certain than reason itself found no echo in the hearts of his generation. The age was one of rationalism and positive science and teachings not in harmony with the spirit of the age, no matter how well presented, could not come into vogue. Formstecher and Hirsch, on the other hand, found many disciples and followers, who in numerous works of greater or lesser value continued in different ways to interpret Judaism in a rationalistic manner and to emphasize its ethical and humanitarian aspect.

The most noted of these rational interpreters of Judaism was Ludwig Philippson (1812-1889). He developed his views on Judaism in several works entitled *Die religiöse Idee im Judenthum, Christenthum, und Islam* (1847); *Die Religion der Gesellschaft*; *Die Resultate in der Weltgeschichte*; and a number of other works. He had two purposes in mind, first, to maintain the unity of the Biblical teachings as an harmonious system applicable for all times; second, to present Judaism as a world religion which aims to develop the ideal man. The first was intended as a reaction against the current of radical Bible criticism of the Protestant theologians, who by their splitting up the Old Testament into many parts produced in different periods and times, also broke up the unity of its ideas and made Biblical Judaism a conglomeration of opinions and views without coherence. Philippson endeavored in his writings to demonstrate that the teachings of the Scriptures about God, the Sabbath, sacrifice, dietary laws, and even the civil and criminal laws, are permeated by one spirit, even if some of these laws had only temporary validity. The second purpose was, of course, the result of the tendency of the time. Like Formstecher and Hirsch, he attempts to prove that Judaism in opposition to paganism teaches the purity of morals, freedom of action, love of fellow-man, and that the Jews are still the guardians of the true religion which aims to aid the human race to reach its goal, that is the highest development of the individual and the unity of humanity. This emphasis on the universal aspect of Judaism goes hand in hand with the minimization of Jewish particularism and the denial of Jewish nationalism. The Jews, says our author, can become an organic part, except religiously, of every nation among whom they dwell. As for himself and his German-Jewish brethren, he exclaims proudly and enthusiastically, "We German Jews are Germans for more than fifteen hundred years; we participated in the German development in all its phases, good

and bad, sorrowful and joyful; we have in us German essence and German spirit."⁴ The present events in Germany form indeed a sad commentary on this naïve declaration.

However, Philippon did not intend to dissolve Judaism in pure humanitarianism. On the contrary, he was much more conservative than many of his colleagues in the Reform party. Like Hirsch, he believed in real revelation and in the preservation of historical Judaism. He advocated the retention of much of traditional Judaism and asserted that the destiny of Israel is to follow the path delineated for it by Mosaism and prophecy. By the first he meant the pure God-idea; by the second, the striving towards eternal peace and the realization in life of the ideal of love of man.

In similar vein, wrote and taught David Einhorn in his treatise, *Das Prinzip des Mosaismus*, I. J. Rülff in his work *Der Einheitsgedanke als Fundamentalbegriff aller Religionen* and a host of others. The same spirit was manifested in the numerous catechisms which appeared during the century. In each of these, while the author endeavors to enunciate the dogmas of the Jewish religion, the beliefs are, as a rule, presented in the light of reason and the ethical and humanitarian teachings not only emphasized but given as the very essence of Judaism.

The spirit of this theology and its emphasis upon the above-mentioned aspects of Judaism corresponded with the tendencies prevailing in West-European Jewry between the forties and the eighties of the last century. The realization of the emancipation in 1848 filled the hearts of the Jews, especially of the upper class, with joy. The desire to retain the benefits of the newly-won freedom fostered in them a social optimism. They believed and wanted to believe that humanity is gradually approaching the Messianic age. They, therefore, wanted to prove their own progressiveness and that of their religion. Even when nationalism became, in the seventies, an important factor in the life of the European nations, the Jews and their spiritual leaders were little affected by it. Their theologians went on repeating continuously that the Jews are no nation and that their mission was the realization of the prophetic ideal of the brotherhood of man. They conceded nationality for every people but the Jews. There was only one dissenting voice in that chorus, that of Moses Hess, but he was no theologian.

Casting a final glance at the philosophic theology of the greater

⁴ *Gesammelte Abhandlungen*, Vol. I, p. 162.

part of the last century, we can say that while it developed little originality, and while its excessive enthusiasm and ecstasy for humanitarianism and the mission of Israel seem to us at present too naïve, it made a contribution, which consists in its emphasis on the ethical aspect of Judaism. That aspect which is undoubtedly an important element in Jewish religion, is not sufficiently stressed by Orthodoxy and was overshadowed by the complexity of the laws upon the minute observance of which it insisted. There was danger of its degradation, and the theological emphasis brought it to the front. Nor should we undervalue the mission theory, for while it is impractical and under present conditions even ludicrous, yet it sets an ideal before the Jews and with some modifications it will have to be accepted even by the present-day nationalism.

99. HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY

We have thus far surveyed the more original aspect of Jewish philosophical and theological activity during the last century, namely the attempt by various thinkers to formulate their own conception of Judaism and coordinate it with the concepts of the current philosophies of the time. But there is another aspect of that activity which, though limited to the exposition of the thoughts of others, is yet of great importance for the understanding of Judaism as a whole. This field which can be described briefly as that of the history of Jewish Mediaeval thought—as it is mainly that period of reflection which formed the object of that history—was exceedingly cultivated by the savants. Numerous works in this branch were produced, some of them of exceptional merit. As a result, the philosophical systems of the great Jewish thinkers of the Middle Ages which were only vaguely known became clarified; their works were expounded and Jewish knowledge was greatly enriched.

The extensive historical-philosophical activity proceeded along several directions. It expressed itself in works and treatises which aimed to expound the teachings of the great Jewish philosophers in more or less historical sequence, in translations of the works of these philosophers into modern languages, in commentaries on them, and finally in monographs upon single thinkers.

i. The first savant who devoted his attention to the history of Jewish Mediaeval thought was Solomon Munk. His *Mélanges de Philosophie Juive et Arabe* (Miscellaneous Essays on Jewish and Arabic Philosophy), published in 1857, was an epoch-making work in this

field and opened a path for his successors. The book is logically divided into three parts, though not formally so. The first deals with the philosophy of Solomon Ibn Gabirol; the second contains a short history of Arabic philosophy from its beginning in the seventh century to its culmination in the teachings of Ibn Roshd (Averroes) at the end of the twelfth; and the third gives a sketch of Jewish thought from the Bible to the end of the fifteenth century. The first part is of special importance, for it was the good fortune of Munk not only to discover an abridged Hebrew translation of Gabirol's work *The Fountain of Life* (Fons Vitae) made by Shem Tob Ibn Falaquera early in the thirteenth century, but also by a flash of intuition to identify him with the famous Mediaeval philosopher Avicbron, quoted frequently by the leaders of scholastic thought. Gabirol, as a philosopher, was for reasons pointed out by us in the first volume (Sec. 167), neglected by the Jews and his book was never translated completely into Hebrew, and as a result, even the Arabic original was lost. He was, however, patronized by the Christian thinkers who knew him under the name of Avicbron, and his book in a Latin translation made early in the twelfth century was, as said, cited by all scholastics, especially by those of the Franciscan order as of great authority. His doctrine colored deeply the teachings of scholasticism. These scholastics, though, did not suspect his Jewish origin and considered him a Christian who wrote in Arabic. It was Munk who first told the learned world that the famed Avicbron was no other than our own great poet, Solomon Ibn Gabirol, and he set for himself the task of presenting to the world an exposition of his philosophy. The first chapter of that exposition which, as stated, forms the first part of the work, contains a French translation of the Hebrew extracts of Falaquera, supplied with copious notes elucidating the difficult passages. The second gives a systematic presentation of Gabirol's doctrines, in which the author utilized not only the abridged translation of Falaquera, but the more complete Latin version. The statement and analysis of Gabirol's teachings are given by Munk in a very lucid manner and he succeeded in unraveling the thoughts of this deep thinker very dexterously. This analysis is followed by two more chapters, one on the sources of Gabirol's doctrines and the other on their influence on Jewish thought.

The last two chapters are of particular merit, as they throw much light both on the relation of Jewish philosophy to the currents of thought in the Arabic world and on the development of various

phases in Jewish thought itself. Munk enumerates three elements in the philosophy of Gabirol: the religious beliefs, the influence of Aristotle's teachings, and the neo-Platonic doctrines which he, more than any other great Jewish philosopher, incorporated in his system, and he proceeds to analyze each of them. With great erudition, our author shows, by describing the Arabic sources from which Gabirol could possibly have drawn his information of neo-Platonism—for he, like his contemporaries, knew no Greek—how the amalgam of Gabirol's philosophy was effected. He maintains, however, that in spite of his indebtedness to neo-Platonism, Gabirol was no mere borrower but an original thinker, and he points out the important deviations in the philosopher's system from that current of Greek Arabic thought.

Gabirol, as said, did not influence greatly the course of Jewish philosophy. The leading thinkers who followed him do not refer to his book, except one who criticized him severely. Still he did not pass unnoticed, and traces of his influence can be detected in many a phase of Jewish reflection. Munk follows up in the last chapter of the first part of his book the influence exerted by Gabirol on a number of his successors, especially on Moses and Abraham Ibn Ezra. Of greater importance was his influence on the Kabbala and our author was the first to touch upon the relation between the doctrines of the *Zohar* and those of Gabirol. This subject was subsequently investigated by numerous scholars who established clearly the closeness between the two mystical currents, and we know now that while the *Fons Vitae* made little impression upon the official Jewish philosophy which was in the main Aristotelian, it contributed much towards the formation of the Kabbalistic doctrines.

In the second part, Munk gives a succinct but quite a detailed analysis of Arabic philosophy and the development of its teachings during five centuries. He devotes special attention to the great Arab philosophers, such as Alfarabi, Ibn Sina (Avicenna), and Ibn Roshd (Averroes). Their doctrines are presented with lucidity and in a masterly manner. This part is a contribution not only to the history of Arabic philosophy but to Jewish as well. As is well known, it is impossible to understand fully the teachings of Jewish Mediaeval thinkers without at least a fair conception of the Arabic currents of thought by which the Jews were influenced. Munk then supplied to Jewish students the necessary background for that understanding. Besides, he gives in his numerous notes many bibliographical data on

the translation of Arabic philosophical works into Hebrew, and also cites frequently references to the doctrines of these philosophers by Jewish thinkers.

The sketch of Jewish philosophy which forms a third part of the work is, on the whole, very brief for it occupies only fifty pages. It is a mere skeleton of the various systems of thought, and the author dwells more on the biographical and bibliographical aspects than on the real philosophical, yet it is distinguished by its completeness. No thinker is omitted and each one receives some characterization no matter how brief. He does not neglect the Karaites and enumerates their philosophers, and even allows them a few more philosophers than they are entitled to. Thus in accordance with the view current among Jewish scholars at that time that it was the Karaites who first interested themselves in Hebrew grammar, exegesis, and religious philosophy, he considers David Al-Mukammas (Vol. I, Sec. 165) the younger contemporary of Saadia, a Karaite thinker. We know now definitely that he was a good Rabbanite. Munk later atoned for his brevity of treatment of Jewish thought in his sketch by his masterful translation of Maimonides' *Guide* where we obtain the best exposition of the doctrines of this master. But of this work later.

ii. Munk was followed by Manuel Joel (1836-1890) who can be described as the first historian of Jewish thought as represented in the teachings of a number of Jewish thinkers. He did not write a complete history of Jewish philosophy, but his various essays on the selected systems constitute a considerable part of that history. He published these essays during a period of thirty-five years and later in 1876 collected them in two volumes under the title *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie* (Contributions to the History of Philosophy). The volumes comprise longer expositions of the systems of Maimonides, Gersonides, Ḥasdai Crescas, of the doctrines of Spinoza's *Tractatus Theologicus Politicus*, of the genesis of his philosophical teachings in general, and a number of shorter essays. The shorter essays deal with Gabirol, with the relation of Albert the Great to Maimonides, with Philo (two essays), with the influence of Jewish philosophy on Christian scholasticism in general, with Saadia, and with Mendelssohn.

The expositions of the systems of the several representative philosophers are very clear and systematic. That of Maimonides is treated under three aspects, first the general principles of his philosophy, then his attempted reconciliation between the teachings of

philosophy and those of the Bible, and finally Maimonides' conception of the Biblical precepts; in other words, his rational explanation of their purposes (Ta'amé ha-Mizwot). Likewise are Gersonides' views presented in two different phases, namely those embodied in his treatise *Milhamot Adonai* (The Wars of the Lord, Vol. II, Sec. 78) and those included in his commentaries on the Pentateuch and other Biblical books. The latter deal more with theological questions and with the harmonization of the views of philosophy with the doctrines of the Scriptures.

Of exceptional merit is the essay on the philosophy of Crescas. He was the first to call attention to the teachings of this original and deep thinker who was up to that time little known in the Jewish learned world. Joel not only expounds his teachings in detail, but also points out his influence on Spinoza. This point he elaborates at length in his essay *Zur Genesis der Lehre Spinozas* where he shows the closeness of the ideas in the earlier phase of the philosophy of the Amsterdam thinker to those of Crescas and he therefore concludes that the former was greatly influenced by the latter. He attempts again in his essay on the *Tractatus Theologicus Politicus* to demonstrate the influence of both Crescas and Maimonides on the formation of Spinoza's theological doctrines embodied in that work. In the essay on Gabirol there is no complete exposition of his philosophy, as such was not the intention, nor is a systematic presentation possible due to the fragmentary state of the translation and to the abstruseness of the philosopher's method. There is though much elucidation of his ideas. The purpose of Joel was merely to demonstrate that Gabirol is primarily a follower of Plotinus, the founder of the neo-Platonic system, and that he displays little originality. Joel thus takes issue with Munk who recognized in Gabirol great originality and he declares quite dogmatically that the *Mekor Hayyim* (Fons Vitae) is nothing but a text book of the neo-Platonic philosophy. He does his best to prove his statement but is not entirely convincing. The subject gave an impetus to later scholars to deal with Gabirol's philosophy at greater length.

The essays on Philo are of a popular nature; two of them were lectures and touch mainly on the manner in which Philo reconciled his philosophy with his conception of Judaism. Likewise, is the essay on Saadia only a general characterization of his life and intellectual activity, but presents little of his philosophy. The essays on the influence of Jewish philosophy on scholasticism deal only

with a limited part of that interesting subject, inasmuch as the author discusses the reflection of that influence mainly in the works of Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas, and deals with the subject in a rather cursory manner. Much has been accomplished in the field of the history of Jewish philosophy since Joel's time, yet his work is still of value and serves as a starting point for many a student in his further investigations.

iii. The work begun by Joel in the field of the history of Jewish philosophy by presenting that history through expositions of the doctrines of individual thinkers, was completed to a great extent by Jacob Guttman (1845-1919), who devoted almost his entire life to the exploration of Jewish Mediaeval thought. The result was a series of treatises dealing with the philosophies of greater and lesser luminaries of Jewish speculation. He began with a work on the *Religionsphilosophie des Abraham Ibn Daud aus Toledo* in 1879, and followed it by one on the philosophy of Saadia (1882), and another on that of Gabirol (1889). He then turned his attention to the less known thinkers, such as Abraham bar Hiyya (Vol. I, Sec. 169), Isaac ben Solomon Israeli (Ibid., Sec. 164), Simon ben Zemaḥ Duran (Vol. II, Sec. 80), Don Isaac Abrabanel, and various thinkers who bore the family name of Shem Tob.

In all these works, our author is thorough and complete and displays a mastery not only of the various phases of Jewish thought in their relation to each other, but also of the currents of Mediaeval speculation, the Arabic and Christian scholasticism. In delineating the philosophy of these men, our author devotes considerable attention to their biographies, their cultural and intellectual environment, and to the kindred phases of their activity, and as a result we obtain a clear and lucid conception of their philosophical views which were influenced by all these factors. Nor does he neglect to trace the influence of these philosophers on their Jewish successors and on the general world. His treatise on the philosophy of Gabirol is to the present day the most complete and thorough work on the teachings of this deep but obtruse thinker.

Of special value are the works of the less known thinkers, for while the leading representatives of Jewish speculation were made a subject of study by various scholars before him, these men were first introduced to the learned world by Guttman. Little was known up to the appearance of our author's treatise, *Die philosophischen Lehren des Isaac ben Solomon Israeli*, of the doctrines of this North African

physician and philosopher, the older contemporary of Saadia, except for some isolated thoughts on certain subjects embodied in various fragments of his works which were quoted as excerpts in the writings of his successors. It was Guttman who, by a thorough study of those of his works which were preserved either in Hebrew or Latin translation as well as of the fragments contained in the works of others, succeeded in giving us a complete statement of his views on important philosophical and theological problems. And though our author denies Israeli any originality of thought and considers him merely a compiler of opinions of others, yet a presentation of the contents of his philosophical works enriches our knowledge of the development of Jewish speculation through the centuries and helps us to appreciate the activity of this man who, under the name of Isaac Africanus, exerted great influence on the development of early European medicine. In similar manner, we are greatly enriched by his studies on Abraham bar Hiyya, Simon ben Zemah Duran, and Isaac Abrabanel in which he coordinated their thoughts scattered in various works into harmonious philosophies. The first was known chiefly as a mathematician and astronomer, the second was considered as one who merely restated the views of Maimonides to which he added little of his own, and the third as a philosophical homiletist. Guttman proved that the men were real thinkers and that each made distinct contributions to Jewish speculation.

Guttman continued also the second phase of philosophical study begun by Joel, that is the investigation of the extent of the influence of Maimonides on Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas. Guttman, on the other hand, widened the field and included a number of Jewish philosophers and most of the important Christian Mediaeval thinkers. He wrote on this subject a number of essays dealing with the various phases of that influence. These essays were later collected into a book entitled *Die Scholastik des dreizehnten Jahrhunderts in ihren Beziehungen zum Judenthum und zur jüdischen Literatur* (The Scholasticism of the Thirteenth Century and its Relation to Judaism and Jewish Literature). There, our author shows how extensive was the influence of a number of the leading Jewish thinkers upon the representatives of Christian thought in that century which was the heyday of Scholasticism. By numerous citations from the works of the leading doctors of the Church, from William of Auvergne (d. 1248) to Duns Scotus (1266-1308), he proves that not only did the theologians of both orders, the Dominican and the Fran-

ciscan study the writings of the Jewish philosophers, but that they actually incorporated many excerpts from their works in their treatises. Since they knew no Arabic and had hardly any knowledge of Hebrew—except for the few scholars who devoted themselves to translations, but these were no theologians—it follows that the influence was limited mainly to Israeli, Maimonides and Gabirol (Avicebron) whose works were translated into Latin. Our author accordingly deals at length with the influence exerted by the teachings of these three men upon the formation of the principal theological doctrines of each of the outstanding scholastics. Israeli's influence, however, was little as compared to that of Maimonides and Gabirol, each of whom had his followers in the schools. The former was mainly studied and followed by the Dominicans among whom were Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas, the latter by the Franciscans. It seems that the works of the other Jewish philosophers were, on the whole, unknown to the scholastics, though they do at times display some knowledge of the views of Saadia and others on certain problems; this information, however, was as a rule, either derived from the writings of Maimonides who refers to the theories of his predecessors, or through some other channels.

Though the book was supposed to deal, according to the title, only with the scholasticism of the thirteenth century, the author saw fit to add a few chapters on the Jewish influence on Christian theology also in the three following centuries, and he carries the delineation of that influence down to the end of the sixteenth century.

The book, as said, deals with the influence exerted by Jewish teachings upon the leading doctors of the Church. There is, however, one exception, and that is Thomas Aquinas, the discussion of whose works is omitted. The reason for such omission is that our author devoted a special long essay to this famous theologian entitled *Das Verhältnis des Thomas von Aquinas zum Judentum und zur der jüdischen Literatur* (The Relation of Thomas Aquinas to Judaism and to Jewish Literature). There our author traces the information on numerous philosophical and theological matters derived by St. Thomas from Jewish sources directly and indirectly, and shows to what extent he was influenced by such knowledge in the formation of his own views.

iv. Joel and Guttmann dealt, as we have seen, with the leading Jewish philosophers and also with several of lesser importance, but they omitted two representative thinkers, namely Bahya and Judah

ha-Levi. Guttman wrote an essay on a work brought to light late in the last century entitled *Torat ha-Nefesh* (The Doctrine of the Soul), and ascribed to Bahya, but did not discuss his philosophy as embodied in the *Hobot ha-Lebabot* (Vol. I, Sec. 158). This gap in the exposition of the systems of Mediaeval Jewish thinkers was filled by David Kaufmann in his essays, *Die Theologie des Bachja Ibn Pakuda* and *Jehuda Halewi*, later included in his *Gesammelte Schriften* (Vol. II).

In the first essay Kaufmann gives a thorough analysis of Bahya's principal theological-philosophical conceptions, namely those grouped around the God-concept and the problem of divine attributes. The discussion of Bahya's ethics is beyond the range of this essay and is accordingly not touched upon. In order to present the proper background for the understanding of his theories, our author, in his introductory chapter, discusses the sources of Bahya's philosophy and comes to the conclusion that he was influenced by the current of neo-Platonism in Arabic thought as expressed in the Encyclopaedia of the Society of Pure Brothers which had a mystic tendency. He followed to a certain degree also the teachings of Aristotle as modified by the Arabic theologians of the conservative school, the Mutazilites. The great merit of the essay consists in the lucid presentation of Bahya's doctrines of the unity of God and His attributes.

The second essay is of a more popular nature and aims to give a comprehensive characterization, though not an intensive one, of Judah ha-Levi both as poet and philosopher. The philosophical aspect is, therefore, treated briefly, more as a view of the world and life than a detailed analysis of the principal doctrines. Yet, the essay as a whole draws a remarkably fine portrait, complete in its general features, of this man who possessed both a deep-feeling soul and a great mind. Kaufmann also interested himself in Gabirol and in later days produced a work of merit on certain phases of his philosophy, entitled *Studien über Salomon Ibn Gabirol* where he elucidates several aspects of his doctrines.

The *Theology of Bahya Ibn Pakuda* served Kaufmann as an introduction to two of his important works which make him an outstanding contributor to the studies in the field of the history of Mediaeval Jewish philosophy. The first of these is his *Geschichte der Attributenlehre in der jüdischen Religionsphilosophie des Mittelalters* (The History of the Doctrine of Attributes in the Jewish Religious Philosophy of the Middle Ages) which appeared in 1877.

The purpose the author had in mind in writing this work was, as he states in his preface, to combat certain grave prejudices held by scholars regarding Jewish Mediaeval philosophy. These prejudices were first, the belief that the Jewish thinkers of that age were slavish followers of their Arabic predecessors and possessed little originality; second, that this philosophy lacked a real process of development according to which the views of the individual men present a coordinated sequence. To show that this is not the case, the author chose to write a history of the most important problem of Jewish as well as of any religious thought, that of the attributes of God, with a view to demonstrate both the originality of the treatment of that problem as well as the progress of its development. He had also another purpose, and that was to comment and elucidate difficult passages in the works of many leading philosophers by comparing the Hebrew text with the original Arabic. He undertook this work because, at that time, there were no scientific editions of the original texts with the exception of Munk's edition of the *Guide* of Maimonides. As a rule, he further tells us, he follows in his presentation of the views on the problem of the attributes the order in which they are stated in the books discussed, and only deviates from it occasionally for the purpose of preserving the unity of the exposition.

Kaufmann carried out the several tasks he set for himself with exceptional ability. Not only are the theories of the divine attributes expounded and clarified in the fullest and widest manner, but many kindred problems are likewise treated extensively, especially the problems of the God-concept and of anthropomorphisms in the Scriptures which are so inherently interwoven with that of the attributes. As a result, the history of the attributes becomes in this treatment really the history of the development of the entire process of purification and exaltation of the God-idea in Jewish Mediaeval thought. At times, our author extends his exposition to include a lengthy presentation of a large part of the philosophy of the thinker under discussion. Such is the case in the exposition of the theory of attributes of Judah ha-Levi in which Kaufmann includes also a systematic presentation of the teachings of the philosopher regarding God and His relation to Israel. In the systematic and comprehensive treatment of this important problem, the originality of Jewish philosophers and the successive development of Jewish thought becomes evident. We see that these men had gone in their speculation far beyond the Arabic philosophers and that the entire problem which is of much

import to religion and philosophy in general was treated from a distinct Jewish point of view. We also note the close intellectual relation between the preceding and succeeding thinkers in the history of Jewish speculation.

His explanations of the difficult passages in the works of the authors discussed are so numerous and at times so extensive, especially in the lengthy notes, that they often form a running commentary on those works. We are thus helped by our author in the understanding of texts of the treatises.

Though the book bears the title *The History of the Theory of Attributes in Jewish Mediaeval Philosophy*, the discussion is limited only to the representative thinkers from Saadia to Maimonides inclusive. The post-Maimonidian philosophers are only referred to whenever necessary but their views on the matter are not expounded. Kaufmann gives the reason for such limitation, namely that the followers of Maimonides contributed but little new to the development of this theory and merely repeated the master's views or slightly modified them. In this, Kaufmann was, of course, wrong, as later researches in the philosophies of these followers proved.⁶ The men discussed in his work are Saadia, Judah ha-Levi, Joseph Ibn Zadiq, Abraham Ibn Daud, and Maimonides. Bahya's Theory of Attributes was discussed by our author in the essay on his theology, and it is therefore omitted from his work. Kaufmann has also the merit of having been the first to expound a large part of the philosophy of Joseph Ibn Zadiq, hitherto neglected, and gave an impetus to others to present the system of this thinker in a more complete manner. Judging the work as a whole, we can say that by its thoroughness of treatment and by the great erudition displayed in it and by the wide interpretation given to the problem of attributes as well as by its numerous explanations of philosophic texts, it is of permanent value and is still of service as a guide to all students of Jewish thought in many of its phases.

The second important work of Kaufmann, *Die Sinne nach hebräischen und arabischen Quellen* (The Senses in Hebrew and Arabic Sources) deals with the development of psychology in Jewish Mediaeval speculation. The book is divided into two parts, the first of which is devoted to the psychological aspect of the subject, and the second to the physiological. In the first, the author discusses all such theories of the senses advanced by Jewish thinkers which bear on

⁶ See on this subject H. A. Wolfson, *Crescas on the Problem of Divine Attributes*, J.Q.R.N.S., Vol. XXIX, and Waxman, *The Philosophy of Don Hasdai Crescas*, New York, 1920, Ch. II.

their function as organs of the soul, such as the divisions into external and internal, the difference between the animal and the human senses, sense perception and its veracity, the relation between it and true knowledge, the seat of sensation whether in the heart or in the brain, and many other problems. In the second part, the physiology of the senses as described in Jewish philosophic literature, is presented. In systematic manner, the author states the various views found in that literature on the construction of the sense organs, on colors, on sounds, on classes of taste, and on various kindred matters. In addition, we are also informed of the extent of the influence the development of this particular study exerted on various phases of Jewish literature. By numerous examples, the author shows that it affected both the Hebrew prose and poetic style, as illustrations from the functions of the senses were employed by exegetes, homiletists, moralists, and even codifiers. The subject of the senses and sensation are thus treated in all their aspects, and the book is a valuable contribution to the history of the development of the psychological and physiological sciences among the Jews during the Mediaeval Ages.

v. Besides the works of these leading historians of Jewish thought, numerous works were written by many scholars dealing either with philosophical problems in a more limited range or with certain aspects of the systems of individual thinkers. The most noted among these are: Ludwig Stein's *Die Willensfreiheit bei den alten jüdischen Religionsphilosophen* (The Problem of the Freedom of the Will in the Systems of the Jewish Religious Philosophers); David Rosin's *Die Ethik des Maimonides* and *Die Philosophie Abraham Ibn Ezras*; Frankl-Grün's *Die Ethik des Judah ha-Levi*; Leopold Weinsberg's *Mikrokosmos*, on the philosophy of Joseph Ibn Z̄adik; Philip Bloch's *Die Willensfreiheit von Chasdai Crescas*; and S. Bäck's *Joseph Albo's Bedeutung in der Geschichte der jüdischen Philosophie*.

A more comprehensive work is A. Schmiedl's *Studien über jüdische, insonders jüdisch-arabische Religionsphilosophie* (Studies in Jewish, especially Jewish-Arabic Religious Philosophy) where the author presents the views of Jewish thinkers on the God-concept, attributes, immortality, and resurrection in a systematic manner and in accordance with the sources. An attempt was also made by Moritz Eisler to write a short history of Jewish philosophy entitled *Vorlesungen über die jüdische Philosophie des Mittelalters*, but neither the quantity nor the quality of the work entitles it to that dignified name.

It is primarily a popular sketch of the development of Jewish thought in its general aspects.

100. TRANSLATIONS AND COMMENTARIES

The task of commenting the standard works of the Mediaeval Jewish philosophers as well as of translating them into modern languages, both of which aimed to make their teachings accessible to wider circles of readers and students, also engaged the attention of many Jewish scholars during the period under discussion. The impetus in the direction of this kind of activity was, like in that of original speculation, given by Mendelssohn. He wrote a Hebrew commentary on Maimonides' *Milot ha-Higoyon* (Logical Terms) which was published as early as 1761. In this commentary he explained the principles of the Aristotelian logic on which the treatise is based, and by numerous examples he elucidated the contents of this rather succinct compendium enabling many of his brethren, who were conversant with no other language but Hebrew, to acquaint themselves with the fundamentals of logic. This treatise together with Mendelssohn's commentary was subsequently translated into German several times by L. Dresnitz (1805), M. S. Neumann (1822), and S. Hilberg (1828). The works of Maimonides thus became the subject of the translation and commentation activity. Besides the logic, his ethical treatise, *The Eight Chapters* (Vol. I, Sec. 177), was greatly favored by translators. It was first rendered into German in 1798 and afterwards several other versions were published, the last being that of M. Wolff in 1863, who also edited the Arabic text. It was also translated into French by Michael Beer.

The attention of the scholars, however, soon turned from the popular and less important philosophical works of Maimonides to his magnum opus, the *Guide of the Perplexed* (*More Nebukim*). The interest was first expressed in commentation. Solomon Maimon (Sec. 15), the Polish Jewish philosopher, undertook to explain the great work of the beloved and revered master of his youth in his commentary *Gib'at ha-More* (*The Height of the More*) published together with a new edition of the *Guide* by Isaac Satanow in 1791. The commentary extends only to the first part of this work, for though the author promised to continue it, it was never completed. However, in spite of the great love borne by Maimon for the teacher whose name he borrowed, the commentary is more of an exposition of his own views and that of Kant than an explanation of those of Maimoni-

des. The commentary on the other two parts was written by the editor Satanow. It deserves the name more than the former, for it attempts to explain the text, but, as all the works of this scholar (Sec. 19) it is not distinguished by depth nor by penetration into the subjects discussed.

With the decline of the knowledge of Hebrew in the lands of Western Europe, the need of Hebrew commentaries on the *Guide* decreased and a new need arose, namely that of translation, which was in due time satisfied. The first of these was Simon Scheyer's German version of the third part of the *More*, published in 1838. The translation employed, besides the Hebrew versions of Ibn Tibbon and Harisi (Vol. I, Sec. 173) also the original Arabic text, and thus helped to correct many errors in the accepted Hebrew version. The rendition displays philosophic knowledge and a comprehensive mastery of the ideas of Maimonides as well as of the currents of thought of the time. It is accompanied by many notes which explain difficult passages of the text and expound a number of theories contained in the work. A year later, there appeared the translation of the first part of the *Guide* into German by R. Fürstenthal, which though it evinces mastery of the subject, falls much below that of Scheyer.

But soon there appeared a work which by the extent of the erudition it displays and by the depth of penetration on the part of the author in the entire field of Greek, Arabic, and Jewish philosophy, is a literary monument and a contribution of the first order to Jewish and general Mediaeval philosophy. This is the edition of the Arabic text of the *Guide* and the accompanying French translation, in three volumes, by S. Munk. The three volumes appeared at intervals of five years in 1856, 1861, 1866 respectively.

The preparation of the edition and translation presents one of the romances of modern learning. Munk, who was, as we know, a great Arabic scholar and a student of Arabic Jewish philosophy, became deeply interested in the work of Maimonides early in life and announced, in 1833, his intention of editing and publishing for the first time the Arabic text of the *Guide* together with a French translation. For this purpose he made for a number of years a thorough study of the works of Aristotle as well as of his Greek and Arabic commentators. He also went to Oxford and Leyden to copy Arabic manuscripts of the *Guide* and to collate them. However, when he had all the material ready and was about to begin the writing of his work, he was overtaken by the greatest misfortune that could befall

any scholar, for he was deprived of the sight of his eyes. Yet, so deeply was he immersed in his work and so completely did he master both the text of Maimonides and the entire field of the literature connected with it, that he continued his work in physical darkness but in great spiritual and intellectual illumination and brought it to a successful close.

The edition of the Arabic text which is in the Hebrew script, as Maimonides himself wrote it and as it is preserved in all manuscripts, represents the most complete work possible in any edition of a text. It is done with the most painstaking scholarship and by collation with many manuscripts, and all improved readings suggested by the numerous commentators noted. But while the edition is of interest only to a limited number of scholars conversant with the Arabic, the French translation presents the theories and views of Moses ben Maimon in their fullest light to a large circle of readers. Not only is it distinguished by its correctness, since it followed the best text but is illuminating by its clarity and captivating by its elegance of style. Its chief value, however, lies in the numerous notes, which taken together, form a running commentary of the highest order, especially on phases little touched upon by previous commentators. The translator tells us in his preface that it was his intention to make his work a guide for all those who seek instruction on Jewish theology and Arabic philosophy.⁶ For this purpose and mainly to enable the readers to comprehend the point of view of the author and follow his reasoning, he subjoined the numerous notes on subjects of great diversity. For some people, says he, it was necessary to explain certain phases of Biblical exegesis and of Jewish theology; for others to give more than a superficial idea of the theories of Aristotle and their interpretation by the Arabic schools, especially those of Alfarabi and Avicenna. At times again, it was necessary to state the view of Jewish philosophers who preceded Maimonides and quote passages from unedited manuscripts.

Accordingly, these notes, which if published separately would have made a fair-sized volume, serve numerous purposes. First, they give better readings of the text which help the student of the classic Hebrew version of Ibn Tibbon to understand many difficult passages. Second, they give the sources of Maimonides' views, whether in Aristotle's works or in those of Arabic commentators. Third, they present briefly the development of phases of philosophic thought.

⁶ *Guide des Égarés*, Vol. I; Preface, pp. vii-ix.

Thus, Munk's notes to Chapter LXVIII of Part I of the *Guide* give an outline of the Aristotelian theory of the soul as developed in the Arabic schools up to Averroes; his notes to chapters LXXIII, LXXIV help the reader to follow Maimonides in the maze of his exposition of the systems of the Mutakallimun. Similarly, his extensive comments on the introduction to Part II of the work where the twenty-six propositions forming the basis of the proof for the existence of God are contained supply the proofs of these propositions and enable one to conceive them intelligently. Finally, these notes offer a vast amount of information on literary, historical, and cultural matters, as those for example to chapters XXIX and XXXVII of Part III, where Munk illuminates with his comprehensive knowledge of Arabic literature the subject of the customs of the Sabeans and the contents of the "Book of the Agriculture of the Nabateans" employed by Maimonides as a means of explaining some of the precepts of the Bible. All these services by no means exhaust the value of the notes and comments which enrich the reader of the *Guide* with knowledge of diverse kinds.

The work of Munk remains, in spite of the many years which have elapsed since its publication, the outstanding translation of and commentary on the chief treatise of Moses ben Maimon. Later scholars made some corrections in the text and supplied some deficiencies here and there, but the work as a whole is thus far not surpassed. Munk's edition and translation of the *Guide* opened the way for translations of the book in other languages. Soon there appeared M. E. Stern's translation into German of the second part of the *More* which completed the German version. Stern, in reality, followed Munk's work, adding little of his own. In 1870, David Jacob Maroni of Florence began his Italian translation of the work, also following in the footsteps of the French Jewish savant, but at the same time displaying originality to a certain degree. The version was completed by him in 1879. An Hungarian translation was begun eight years later by Moritz Klein and brought to a successful end in 1890.

Of all the renditions of the *Guide* into European languages which appeared subsequent to that of Munk, the most important is the English version by M. Friedländer, which appeared in the years 1881-1885 in three volumes. He, of course, could not escape the influence of his great predecessor, but on the whole, he evinces much independence. It is also supplied with copious notes which clarify

the text and explain many theories discussed in the book. In addition, the version is introduced by a comprehensive biography of Maimonides, and an extensive bibliographical essay on the editions and translations of the *Guide*, as well as all other important works dealing with it, and finally an analysis of the content of the book. The analysis is of great help to the student as it affords him a bird's eye view of the *More* as a whole before he enters upon a detailed study of the parts. Friedländer's translation, by its comprehensiveness, completeness, clarity, and excellence of style, occupies an honorary place beside that of Munk in that type of literature.

Judah ha-Levi's *Kuzari* (Vol. I, Sec. 170) likewise received great attention from Jewish scholars during the period though in a lesser degree than the *Guide*. It was first commented on in Hebrew by Isaac Satanow in his edition of the book which appeared in 1794, and later again also in Hebrew by G. Brecher (d. 1873) in 1838. Brecher's commentary is much superior to that of Satanow, for it penetrates deeply into the meaning of that most difficult work and elucidates the views and theories of the author. Besides the commentary, Brecher wrote also a long and detailed introduction where he presents the philosophical and theological conceptions of ha-Levi in a systematic manner.

The *Kuzari* was made accessible to German readers by David Cassel in his version which appeared first in 1853 and in a second edition which appeared in 1869. It is, however, not a mere translation but a work which manifests great erudition and comprehensive mastery of the entire field of Mediaeval Jewish philosophy, as well as deep understanding of the thought of the complicated work. Cassel employed in his work mainly the Hebrew text of Ibn Tibbon's version and availed himself of the Arabic original only partly as he tells us in the preface. Yet, the Hebrew text, as given in his edition, is much improved for he painstakingly corrected all errors of earlier editions by consulting numerous manuscripts and commentaries and selecting the best readings. His German version is clear and lucid and helps the student of the *Kuzari* to understand the difficult parts of the text. The main contribution of Cassel, however, lies in his German commentary which is extensive and exceedingly rich in information on all subjects pertaining to the work. Not only does it explain the difficult passages which are very numerous, but it throws light on philosophical, theological, mathematical, grammatical, and literary matters referred to in the text and which cannot be

understood without a knowledge of the principles of these sciences. This knowledge is supplied by our commentator in a masterly way. Thus in his comments to section XX of book II, he gives a résumé of the Ptolemaic astronomy as far as it affects the principles of the Jewish calendar. Again in his notes to section LXXVIII of the same book, he presents a digest of the theories of Hebrew vocalization and accentuation, as far as they are implied in the formation of the meter based on quantity. Similar long notes giving accounts of the principles and phases of sciences abound in the commentary. As a result of these qualities, the commentary far excels all previous attempts at the explanation of the *Kuzari* and really opens the way to the understanding of the philosophic work of ha-Levi which is otherwise at times very baffling by the brevity of its treatment of weighty and important subjects.

Another German translation of the *Kuzari*, this time from the Arabic original, was made by H. Hirshfeld, who also edited the Arabic text. Of the other standard works of Jewish philosophers, the following were translated or commented on during the period under discussion. Saadia's *Emunot we-Deot* was rendered into German by Julius Fürst in 1845. The translation is, like some of the other works of this many-sided scholar, not thoroughly scientific and is faulty in many places. A partial rendition of the book in the same language containing the introduction and the first chapter was issued by Philipp Bloch in 1880 and is of superior quality. Bahya's *Hobot ha-Lebabot* was first rendered into German by R. Fürstenthal in 1836, who also added a Hebrew commentary. A new Hebrew edition with a short commentary by Benjacob and a German introduction by A. Jellinek was published ten years later (1846). Several other German translations were subsequently issued in 1854 and 1856 by M. Baumgarten and M. Stern respectively. Abraham Ibn Daud's *Emunah Ramah* (Exalted Faith; Vol. I, Sec. 172) was translated by Simson Weil (1852) and *Albo's Ikkarim* (Vol. II, Sec. 81) by Ludwig and Wolf Schlesinger to which is also added a comprehensive introduction presenting the views of the author in a systematic way.

101. MYSTICISM

The mystic phase of Jewish religious thought, expressed in various teachings and embodied in many books which usually go under the name of Kabbalistic writings, also became a subject of great interest to Jewish scholars and a number of them devoted themselves

to the exploration of the works produced by the students of the Kabbala. Several are of great importance and are distinguished both by their thoroughness and comprehensiveness.

i. The first of these is the famous treatise on the history and teachings of the Kabbala, *La Kabbale* by Adolphe Franck (1809-1893), professor of philosophy in the Collège de France, a work which earned the author a membership in the French Academy. The work, as a whole, is marked by a mastery on the part of the author of the entire field of philosophy and mysticism in general and of the Kabbala in particular, as well as by a spirit of penetration in the complicated teachings, but is marred by a partisanship towards certain theories and uncritical views on the literary sources which affected the conclusions concerning the antiquity of the Kabbala and the authenticity of its principal works.

It is divided into three parts, each devoted to a particular subject. The first treats of the antiquity of the Kabbala; the second expounds its teachings; and the third discusses its possible origin and its relation to the doctrines of the philosophic systems and to the religious teachings of the ancient world. The work is also preceded by a long preface and an introduction dealing with the study of the Kabbala in Christian Europe and with its general characteristics as a current of human thought respectively.

The preface, as stated, is primarily of an historical nature. After stating briefly the importance of the Kabbala as a system of thought which deserves a thorough study and great attention, he deplores the fact that such was not the case. He then gives a survey of the works written on the Kabbala by Christian scholars, from Reuchlin and Pico de Mirandola in the fifteenth century to Tholuck in the thirties of the last century and demonstrates their insufficiency. He points out that most of these writers, with the exception of Knurr von Rosenroth, author of the *Kabbala Denudata* (The Uncovered Kabbala), hardly studied the older original sources of the system, but drew their information from several works of the younger Kabbalists, especially the followers of the Lurianic current (Vol. II, Sec. 118). Besides, most of the Christian students of the Kabbala were animated by a desire to find in it proofs for the veracity of the teachings of Christianity. He claims, therefore, that his study, based on the explanation of the chief sources of that system and permeated with an unpartisan spirit, will place for the first time before the world an objective and comprehensive exposition of that system of mysti-

cism. The value of the preface consists, of course, not in this assertion, but in the excellent, though succinct, history of the Kabbalistic studies by Christian scholars.

He then passes over in the introduction to a definition of the very essence of the Kabbala or rather of mysticism in general and makes an interesting observation on the subject. Mysticism or Kabbala—he closely identifies the two—says he, is neither philosophy nor religion, meaning by it dogmatic or orthodox religion. The first relies mainly on human reason, the second on authority, while mysticism occupies a position between the two. It does not want to take authoritative writings literally, nor does it reject them. It believes in human reason but it does not assume that man can reach truth without inspiration and revelation. It, therefore, strives to a kind of reconciliation between tradition and reason, both of which it finds too cold, and adds the element of warmth of emotion and spiritual depth. Its method is to find in the Sacred Scriptures more than the plain meaning the letters convey and interpret them as symbols and word pictures of secret thoughts and teachings. These three spiritual currents, namely the traditional-dogmatic, the philosophic, and the mystic, says our author, are found in all religions, and he illustrates his theories by examples from Christianity, Islam, and Judaism, and informs us that to the elucidation of the last current in Judaism the entire book is devoted. The introduction serves him as a background for his theory which he develops in the first part of the work, namely that the Kabbala is of high antiquity in Jewry, for as a necessary trend in religious development, it must already have assumed some form during a period of great religious activity among the Jews, such as that of the Second Commonwealth.

He begins the first part by pointing to the numerous references in the Mishnah and the Talmud to mystic teachings, secretly taught by Tannaim and Amoraim to select disciples, which are designated by the terms *Ma'asē Bereshit* and *Ma'asē Merkabah* (Vol. I, Sec. 180). He also refers to the frequent use in the Aramaic translation of the Pentateuch (Targum Onkelos) of the term *Memra* (The Word of God) as an indication of the existence of such teachings in the time of the early Tannaim, the first century C.E. and probably even earlier. He comes, therefore, to the conclusion that the Kabbala was already taught at that time by leading scholars and consequently its origin is still older.

Of such theories, we can say that while it is true that mystic teach-

ings were known in early times, they can by no means be identified with those of the Kabbala. The inability to discern between the early Tannaitic mysticism and that of the Mediaeval Kabbala, constitutes a grave error on the part of Franck. He is also incorrect in the citation of sources, for he accepts on faith the view expressed in the Talmud that the Aramaic translation of the prophetic books was really made by Jonathan ben Uziel, the disciple of Hillel, (c. 30 B.C.E.). He further errs in ascribing to the *Targum Onkelos* several passages quoted in another translation of later date than that of *Onkelos*, called *pseudo-Jonathan* or *Yerushalmi* (the Palestinian, Vol. I, p. 116*). Our author, though, is not satisfied with demonstrating the existence of the Kabbala in early Tannaitic times; he even endeavors to prove the early composition of its two principal works, the *Sefer Yezirah* (Book of Creation, Vol. I, Sec. 182) and the *Zohar* (Vol. II, Sec. 113). With much keenness of argument, he defends his thesis that the Book of Creation referred to several times in the Talmud is the very same which is known to us as one of the principal sources for Kabbalistic teaching, and consequently assumes that it was composed very early. He rejects the view advanced by some Kabbalists of the fourteenth century which ascribes the composition of the work to Akiba (2nd century C.E.) and advances its origin to a period not later than the middle of the first century. That such a view is untenable is evident to everyone acquainted with this problem (see Vol. I, p. 397).

With still greater zeal Franck defends the reputed authorship of the *Zohar*, or at least a large part of it, by Simon ben Yohai (second half of 2nd century C.E.). Here he wages a mighty battle, for the opponents of the theory were many, among them Jacob Emden, a famous Rabbinic authority, and a number of later scholars of great renown. His refutation of the arguments of the opponents is executed with great skill, but it can hardly stand the test of criticism. Of all the arguments he advances against the contrary view that the *Zohar* was composed in the thirteenth century by Moses ben Shem Tob de Leon who revealed it to the world, the most plausible is the one based on the language of the *Zohar*. He contends that such a proficiency in Aramaic, the language in which it is written, could not have been attained by a thirteenth century author, and consequently the work was composed many centuries earlier. This argument, however, with all its plausibility goes only to show an earlier origin of the *Zohar*

* The passages are quoted in the German translation of the book, p. 49 ff.

but by no means proves Simon ben Yoḥai's authorship which Franck endeavors to demonstrate. Our author though holds fast to his view and indorses the Kabbalist tradition ascribing the authorship to this Tanna, the disciple of Akiba. He is quite aware that there are many parts of the *Zohar* of later date, though, in his opinion, none later than the seventh century C.E., but claims that the principal teachings of this great book were formulated by Simon ben Yoḥai and that they were transmitted to the initiated from generation to generation who made their own additions and incorporated them into the work.

The second part is the most important one of the book and imparts to the entire work its great value. In it, Franck presents a complete exposition in an exceptionally systematic manner of the fundamental teachings of the Kabbala as they are embodied in the principal works, the Book of Creation and the *Zohar*. He delineates in detail the theories of the Kabbala, on God, the *Sephiroth*, the world and its creation, man, the soul, its nature, essence, and destiny, and kindred matters. With great acumen and deep penetration the author extracts from the mass of symbolism and figurative language of the works the kernels of metaphysical thought and joins them together into a system with such clearness that even the uninitiated can gain a fair conception of it in its main outlines. Not attempting to present a résumé of the author's exposition of the Kabbala which would carry us too far afield, we may only remark that on the whole he imparts to its teachings a pantheistic coloring and makes it differ from the accepted Jewish tradition on a number of important points. This tendency subsequently gave rise to a controversy on the interpretation of the Kabbalistic teachings.

In the third part, the author discusses in a number of chapters the relation of the Kabbala to the philosophy of Plato, the Jewish-Alexandrian school of thought, to Philo, to Christianity, and finally to the religious ideas of the Chaldeans and the Persians. The purpose of these discussions is to determine whether any of these systems influenced the theories of the Kabbala and brought about their formation. He rejects the supposition advanced by earlier students of the Kabbala that it borrowed its teachings from neo-Platonism, or from Philo, or from Plato. He is aware of the many similarities between the Kabbalistic theories and the views of those systems, especially of the first, and offers an explanation of the phenomenon. The analogies in the views, says he, do not indicate any borrowing on the part of

the Kabbala from neo-Platonism, but merely signify a common source for both systems. Besides, he adds, some of the views, such as regarding the soul and its relation to God, which are so strikingly similar in the Kabbala and neo-Platonism are common to all types of mysticism and could have arisen in both independently of each other. In general, he asserts rather dogmatically that the Kabbala which is a Palestinian product did not borrow from Greek philosophy, and he claims, therefore, that there are no Greek ideas in the *Zohar*.⁷

The case, in his view, is different with the ideas of the Chaldeans and the Persians, especially of Zoroastrianism. In the mystic teachings of these religions, our author finds the source of the Kabbala and he cites many parallels between the two. He believes that the Jews, during their sojourn in Babylon, came in contact with the teachings of Zoroaster and their mysticism gave them the impetus to develop one of their own along similar lines. He meets the objection which may arise to this view, namely that Zoroaster began to propagate his new religion as late as 549 B.C.E. only ten years before the return of the Jews from exile, a time too short for any appreciable influence, by two arguments. First, says he, even a decade or so may suffice for spiritual influence; second, not all the Jews left Babylon, for as we know seventy years after the return, another migration of Babylonian Jews into Palestine led by Ezra took place, and even later there was constant communication between the Jews of the two countries. There was then sufficient time for Zoroastrian mysticism to exert influence upon the formation of a similar current in Judaism on its native soil, Palestine.

Franck, however, by no means denies the originality of the Kabbala by placing its origin in Babylon and assuming its rise under Persian influence. He is quite aware that Zoroastrianism teaches a twofold dualism of God and nature and of two fundamental forces in the world, good and evil, while the Kabbala teaches a complete unity of God and the world, and denies positive reality to evil. The influence is, therefore, merely limited to a kind of stimulus in a certain direction, to the creation of a starting point; but afterwards the Kabbala went on its own way.

This rather far-fetched theory which was primarily due to Franck's identifying the Kabbala with earlier currents of mysticism in Judaism which in turn arose from his limited knowledge of Talmudic literature aroused much opposition. The book, as a whole, in spite of these

⁷ *La Caballe*, German translation, pp. 214, 249.

aberrations, is, on account of its systematic expositions of the teachings of the Kabbala, of permanent value. It made a great impression at the time of its appearance, and was immediately translated into German by Adolph Jellinek, himself a student of the Kabbala, with notes and additions.

ii. A second important work for the exposition of the Kabbala is David Joel's *Religionsphilosophie des Sohar* which appeared five years after Franck's work. The work was intended by the author primarily as a detailed criticism of Franck's exposition of the system, but as a real criticism cannot be developed without the presentation of the critic's own views on the subject, it contains the author's systematic presentation of the Kabbalistic teachings as embodied in the principal works. Its form, however, is that of criticism, as Joel arranged his own book in the very same way as Franck, and it is accordingly divided into three parts dealing with the same subjects as the work of the French savant. In fact, the German Jewish scholar follows his French colleagues step by step, chapter by chapter, and does not overlook even an erroneous translation of a single word in a passage.

He begins with the criticism of Franck's theories of the antiquity of the Kabbala, the time and authorship of the *Sefer Yezirah* and the *Zohar*. It must be said that this phase of criticism is not distinguished by thoroughness nor by originality. It is true that he questions Franck's assumption of the identity of the teachings of the Kabbala with those referred to in the Talmudic literature as the secrets of the *Ma'asē Bereshit* and *Ma'asē Merkabah*, but does not undertake to analyze the character of the latter teachings and show their distinctness.⁸ As for the authorship of the *Sefer Yezirah*, he differs little from Franck, ascribing it to Akiba and thus post-dating it only by a century. He is more radical though, as regards the *Zohar*. He denies the authorship of any of its parts by Simon ben Yoḥai, but at the same time he does not ascribe it to Moses de Leon or any thirteenth century man, but leaves the question open. He adds, however, that even if we were to assume its composition by a man of that century, we would have to admit that the teachings were not of his own invention but of much earlier origin. More original and comprehensive is the second part which contains, besides the criticism of Franck's exposition of the teachings of the Kabbala, also the author's own views. This part also constitutes the bulk of the book. His main opposition to the French scholar's work is that it represents the

⁸ On the distinction between the earlier type of Jewish mysticism and the Kabbala, see Vol. I; Sec. 180 and Vol. II, Sec. 104.

Kabbala as opposed to the accepted tradition on important dogmas and conceptions, namely on creation and the value of the literal meaning of the laws. Franck, as mentioned above, gave to the Kabbala a pantheistic coloring saying that it denies "creation from nothing" and teaches the emanation of the world from God; further that it undervalues the plain meaning of the precepts, while emphasizing their symbolic value; in brief that it is a kind of a third current in Judaism. All such views are rejected by Joel.

After long discussion, Joel comes to the conclusion that the older Kabbala, i.e., of the *Sefer Yetzirah* does not deny the validity of the plain meaning of the Bible either in matters of law or in its historical parts. It merely avers that there is also a secret meaning to the words of the Bible besides the verbal ones, but that both are true. Further, that it does not teach that God is the immanent ground of the world, nor does it teach the emanation of the world from God but "creation from nothing" as an act of His free will. He admits, though, that the conception of creation taught by the later Kabbala, namely that of the *Zohar*, differs from the one usually accepted by the Jews, as it posits the creation only of the first *Sephirah*, *Kether*, (Crown) which is a purely spiritual substance, and that henceforth the becoming of all other beings proceeded by development from that first substance.⁹ We shall not follow our author further in his views as it is beyond the scope of the survey, but we will state in general that Joel endeavored to minimize the gap between the teachings of the Kabbala and those of Talmudic Judaism. He admits differences but not of an essential character. In fact, he proves by numerous citations, that some of the views which Franck declared as distinctly originated by the Kabbala are already found in the Midrash, though in a less complete form.

As regards the origin of the Kabbala and its relation to other mystical teachings to which the third part of the book is devoted, Joel differs with Franck. He rejects the theory of the Persian origin and shows its untenability with forceful arguments. He considers the Kabbala a purely Jewish product, but on the other hand, admits that it was influenced in the course of its development in certain phases by the teachings of neo-Platonism as well as by those of Philo, since it undoubtedly has certain analogies with the doctrines of all these systems. Joel's work thus forms a fine complement to that of

⁹ For a more detailed exposition of the views of the Kabbala on creation and the world, see Vol. II, Sec. 109.

Franck and a contribution to our knowledge of the Kabbala.

iii. A third exposition of the teachings of the Kabbala was undertaken by Isaac Mises in his two small treatises bearing the title, *Darstellung der jüdischen Geheimlehre* (Exposition of Jewish Mysticism) which appeared in 1862 and 1863. The work bears also a Hebrew title, *Zafnat Pa'aneah* (The Revelation of the Secrets). The first treatise is devoted primarily to an explanation of the Kabbalistic teachings as embodied in an unpublished work of the eighteenth century by the Kabbalist, Jonathan Eibeschütz, whose activity as a practical Kabbalist caused at times a controversy which divided German Jewry into two camps. In this work, Eibeschütz appears not only as a mystic but as a philosophic thinker and presents some of the important teachings of the Kabbala, especially on the relation of God to the universe, in a speculative, though unsystematic manner.

Our author coordinates the teachings systematically and discusses their relation to the system of Kabbala as a whole thus throwing light on its fundamental doctrines. He also correlates these doctrines with those of neo-Platonism and believes that the latter exerted great influence upon the formation of the former.

In the second treatise Mises undertakes to present a systematic exposition of the views of the Lurianic school, namely the one which was founded by Isaac Luria (1537-1574, Vol. II, Sec. 118) and which from the end of the sixteenth century on became the dominant mystic current. It is the author's view that this school is more consequent in its teachings and that it solves the great problem which is the basis of all religious speculation, namely how the finite world arose from an infinite and purely spiritual cause, in a more satisfactory manner than the other school. He proposes to deal with the four phases of its teachings, namely (a) dogmatic theology and cosmogony; (b) ethics and religious knowledge; (c) doctrines of the soul and man; and (d) the meaning of divine worship and the precepts of the Torah. Unfortunately, only the first phase is expounded in the treatise, while the exposition of the others, which were supposed to be given in a subsequent part, was never completed.

In his presentation of the doctrines of the Kabbala bearing on God and the becoming of the world which included mainly the theories of the *Sephiroth* and the four worlds, Mises is clear and lucid but gives to all these mystic conceptions an excessively speculative character. His interpretation, therefore, raises a doubt in our minds whether it really expresses the meaning of the mystic teachings of the Lurianic

school or it is of his own construction. On the whole, it appears from his presentation that the younger Kabbalists taught pure emanation and practically denied creation, a thing which can hardly be accepted. The doubt is strengthened by the fact that the author cites only few excerpts from Kabbalistic works and it is difficult to determine from the several passages which he appends at the end of the book the correctness of his interpretation. Still, the clearness of his exposition sheds some light over these abstruse teachings which when abstracted from the allegoristic and symbolic language in which they are expressed contain some deep philosophic thought.

iv. Of the various studies devoted more to the history of the Kabbala than to the exposition of its teachings the most noteworthy are those of M. H. Landauer and A. Jellinek. The first wrote a series of articles in the *Litteraturblatt des Orients* in 1845 on the *Zohar*, its authorship and origin. In these studies he advanced a view that the author of the *Zohar* was not Moses de Leon who is supposed to have revealed it to the world, but a contemporary of his, Abraham Abulafia, (Vol. II, p. 257) who is otherwise known to us as a prolific mystic writer. He defends his theory with great skill, but in spite of that it was proved by many scholars as untenable.

Of great importance is Jellinek's contribution to the history of the Kabbala. In a series of small treatises, such as *Moses ben Shem Tob de Leon und sein Verhältniss zum Sohar* (1852), *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Kabbala* in two parts, and *Ginzē Hokmat ha-Kabbala* (The Treasures of the Wisdom of the Kabbala) he elucidates the history of many of the Kabbalistic works and the development of their teachings. In the first he discusses the authorship of the *Zohar* and comes to the conclusion that de Leon is, if not the sole writer of the *Zohar*, at least one of its principal composers and its editor. The *Beiträge* contain numerous short essays on various Kabbalistic works, on the influence of certain non-Jewish currents of thought on the Kabbala and kindred subjects. One of these essays deals with Christian influence on Jewish mystics. In it, the author traces some analogies in a number of figures of speech and allegorical expressions employed by several Kabbalist writers in the thirteenth century with those found in the writings of Christian theologians, especially converted Jews. He also finds similarities in their interpretations of the mystic values of the divine names and their letters. The method was, of course, used for different purposes, but it is not impossible that the works of these Christian divines who preceded the Jewish mystics

influenced them to employ the same expressions and method in their own treatises. Both treatises contain large excerpts from hitherto unpublished Kabbalistic texts.

The last work consists of editions of small mystical treatises from the pre-Zoharite period, such as *Maseket Azilut* (the Treatise on Emanation), "Book of Intuition," ascribed to Ḥamai Gaon, "An Epistle by Abraham Abulafia," and *Kether Shem Tob* (The Crown of the Good Name, i.e., the Tetragramaton) by the German Kabbalist, Abraham di Colonia (Vol. II, p. 358). The texts are edited with great care and provided with a German introduction dealing both with the life of the authors and the contents of their teachings.

CHAPTER XIII

RABBINIC LITERATURE

102. GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS

Due to the great change which took place in Jewish life during the Modern Period, the type of literary activity which we usually denominate as Rabbinic, was not as prominent and did not exert as much influence on that life as in the preceding age. As we have seen, the widening of the Jewish horizon caused by the vicissitudes in the political, economic, and intellectual status of the Jews brought about a diversity of interests on the part of Jewish scholars and literary men. Other fields of human endeavor attracted them, and the study of the law was no more the center of expression of Jewish intellectuality. As a result, new branches of literature flourished, and for the first time in history, there arose an extensive belletristic literature among the Jews. Similarly, there developed all the various branches of study hitherto surveyed by us, which though they often discuss and elucidate the same subjects with which Rabbinics deal, yet differ both in method and content from the former.

Yet in spite of these conditions unfavorable to the development of Rabbinic literature, there was produced during the period a considerable mass of such works. To the large masses of East-European Jewry to whom religion was still the most important thing in life, scholarship still meant excellence in Talmudic and Rabbinic knowledge and the ability to discuss such matters dexterously. Consequently the rabbis, in order to vindicate their scholarship as well as to satisfy their need for self-expression, continued to labor in the field of Halakah and at times even in that of Agada in the good old traditional Rabbinic manner and wrote many treatises containing super-commentaries on the commentaries of the Mishnah, Talmud, codes, and other standard works, comments and *novellae* to the same, and above all Responsa. This productivity, like all literary productivity was, in a way, even promoted by the conditions of modern life,

namely the multiplication of Jewish printing-houses, the spread of the habit of acquisition of books by the large public, and other factors. As a result, Rabbinic literature flourished and the number of books in this field during the period under discussion not only equals that produced in a similar length of time during the Middle Ages but may even exceed it.

The case, however, is different in regard to the quality of this literature. Here the aspect changes entirely. The great scholars of the period with all their intellectual endowment could add but little of a basic and fundamental character to any of the phases of Rabbinics. Coming as they did at the end of a long span of time of extensive and intensive study concentrated on one point, the law and its development, these rabbis were at a great disadvantage. The great commentaries on the Mishnah and Gemarah had already been written, the best super-commentaries had likewise been composed, the codes compiled, and their many excellent commentaries produced, published, and accepted. There was only one way open to them, that is to write numerous supercommentaries on the works of their predecessors or *novellae* to the Talmud, codes, and other Halakic treatises. Both of these types of activity though they provided ample room for casuistry, left little opportunity for real originality. The great intellectual endeavor embodied in the greater part of the Rabbinic works of this period is primarily expressed in raising contradictions and difficulties (*Kushyot*) in the statements of the Talmud or of those of its principal commentaries, such as Rashi and *Tosofot* (Vol. I, Sec. 145), or those of the codes, principally in that of Maimonides or in the treatises of the *novellae* of earlier scholars, and by keen differences in conception, smoothe these difficulties out and solve the "problems" thus raised. It is true that at times a new interpretation, a finer conception of legal statements and passages, and occasionally a change in a legal decision results from these discussions, but on the whole, there is little of the practical in the mass of *novellae*, and the only result of the display of great mental acumen in these fine discussions is a psychological one, namely that it deepens the understanding of the student. There is more of the practical aspect in the supercommentaries on the commentaries of the codes, but even in these, the pilpulistic or the casuistic element outweighs the mere interpretative which aims at a definite decision. There is, of course, a greater practical aspect to the numerous collections of Responsa for many of the inquiries arose out of the needs of life

and the answers asked for were supposed to render decisions on subjects affecting certain religious practices or life problems. But unfortunately, many of these Responsa, unlike those of the Middle Ages, are of a theoretical or hypothetical character, and partake of the character of the *novellae*. Numerous inquiries in these collections contain only a request for solutions of a casuistic difficulty and the Responsa accordingly display great keenness of mind and much erudition in solving this difficulty and many more raised by the respondent himself. Still, compared to the other phases of this literature, the Responsa, as said, are animated by a breath of life, and the greater part bear a relation to some practical religious question, though the respondents seldom saw the need of adjusting religious practices to conditions of modern life even when such a need in certain cases was a crying one.

As a result of the above-mentioned characteristics, the literature presents a monotonous aspect both in method and in content. The differences consist more in degree of mental keenness displayed by the authors than in kind. That many Rabbinical works form the exception to the rule and rise above the level indicated is, of course, self-evident. There is a number of treatises, commentaries, and collections of Responsa which display originality of legal thought, a penetrating analysis of concepts, and deep understanding of the Talmud and codes surpassing that of the earlier savants. It is to this type of works which by their excellence represent and characterize the best that there is in the entire Rabbinic literature, that our attention shall be devoted.

A. COMMENTARIES

103. COMMENTARIES ON THE PALESTINIAN TALMUD

Commentation of the standard Halakic works, such as the Mishnah, the tractates of the Talmud, the standard codes, and even the great Agadic collections, the Midrashim, was, as we saw in the preceding volumes, an important phase of Rabbinic literature. It was, of course, not neglected by the scholars of the period, and numerous commentaries of all these works of greater or lesser extent were written by various scholars. Most of them, however, as indicated above, are of the *novellae* type and the name commentary can be extended to them only by courtesy. It is only a limited number

which deserve that title. Of these, the earliest and the best are two commentaries on the Palestinian Talmud (Yerushalmi), *Penē Moshe* (The Face of Moses), and the *Karban ha-Edah* (The Offering of the Community). The Palestinian Talmud was, on the whole, little studied by the scholars of the Middle Ages, and though it was utilized by the leading commentators on the Mishnah and by several of the codifiers, especially by Al-Fasi and Maimonides, and passages from it were quoted by many authors, it was never fully commented. Several partial commentaries written by earlier scholars remained in manuscript. The first editions of that Talmud appeared, therefore, without commentaries. These two filled a real need of the Rabbinic students who wanted to explore the contents of the Talmud.

The *Penē Moshe* which covers the entire Talmud was written by Moses Margolis of Kaidan, Lithuania (middle of the 18th century), the teacher of the Gaon of Wilna in early student days. The *Karban ha-Edah* was composed by David Frankel, at first rabbi at Dessau and later at Berlin, who was the instructor in Talmud of Moses Mendelssohn. It covers only the tractates of two orders, *Moed* and *Nashim* and two tractates of the order *Nezikin*. Both of these commentaries really explain the text of the Palestinian Talmud in a sufficient manner and enable the student to pursue his studies without any difficulty. The authors thus performed a service to Talmudic scholarship for they unlocked the gates of that hitherto closed work. On the whole, there is a great similarity between the two and they concur in the explanation of most of the passages. There are, however, some differences in their method and general character. The author of the *Karban ha-Edah* is more detailed, inasmuch as he explains more passages and hardly leaves a single statement or even an expression out, but his explanations are brief and do not illuminate the entire content of the passage in a penetrating manner; the author of the *Penē Moshe* limits his explanations to selected passages, but they are distinguished by length and comprehensiveness which conduce to a deeper study. On the other hand, the former is more careful in correcting the erroneous readings of the text which are very numerous, on account of the lack of attention given to it by scholars through the ages, while the latter is less critical in such matters and attempts to explain the wrong readings by forced interpretation. Both commentators drew upon the interpretations of earlier scholars in the explanation of passages which are also found in the Babylonian Talmud, or are quoted in the commentaries on the Mishnah, codes,

or other works of the preceding savants. In such cases, Margolis is more selective and quotes only the best explanation out of several given, while Frankel quotes two or more.

Both commentaries, however, suffer from a lack of mastery of the language of the Palestinian Talmud and a critical insight into the text. That Talmud was written in the Western Aramaic dialect, and it also abounds in Greek words which were an integral part of the vernacular of the Jews in Palestine. Besides, as stated, the text, due to certain conditions (Vol. I, Sec. 79) was left in an incomplete state, quotations are given without references and terms are abbreviated or given erroneously. Consequently, without a knowledge of the Aramaic and the Greek, and without possession of the science of text criticism, it is impossible to explain many passages. Both of these learned rabbis lacked the necessary knowledge and often their explanation of Greek words and terms occurring in that Talmud calls forth a smile. In one place, a Greek line is explained by Rabbi Moses in a grotesque way by mistaking the words for similarly sounding Aramaic terms. Many of these defects were later corrected by scholars with a philological training, especially by Zechariah Frankel, in his introduction to the Palestinian Talmud where he gives a glossary of the principal Greek terms found there; and many attempts were also made to correct the text in collections of notes to certain tractates or in partial commentaries which were written later. But thus far these two early commentaries were not superseded and they still remain with all their insufficiencies the accepted guide to the *Yerushalmi*.

104. COMMENTARIES ON THE MISHNAH

An outstanding commentary on the work which is the basis of all Halakah, namely the Mishnah, was written by Israel Lifshitz, rabbi of Danzig (d. 1861) under the name of *Tiferet Yisrael* (The Glory of Israel, with reference to the name of the author). The Mishnah was commented numerous times, and the commentary of Bertinoro (Vol. II, Sec. 45) was accepted by all Jewry as the standard one. Still the one of Lifshitz adds many new features and greatly facilitates its study even for those who are not deeply versed in Halakic scholarship, for this was his main purpose. He tells us in his preface that the motive for his undertaking the composition of the commentary was that with all the good qualities of Bertinoro's commentary, there were still many places unexplained and baffling.

Besides, numerous interpretations of the former were refuted by Yom Tob Lippman Heller, the author of the *Tosofot Yom Tob* (Vol. II, Sec. 48) and students were confused not knowing whom to follow. It was, therefore, his intention to give a brief but clear explanation of the Mishnah which should incorporate all the results of the Talmudic scholarship, and also add other features conducive to a comprehension not only of the text of the Mishnah but to the entire Halakah which developed from it, such as introductions to the Mishnaic orders and to single tractates, and the ultimate decision of the law.

The fundamental characteristic of the commentary is its detailed method of explanation. While Bertinoro explains long passages at one time, Lifshitz breaks up the passages into single statements and explains each separately thus helping the uninitiated to find their way in the Mishnah. He does not omit the explanation of any difficult word. As regards the content of the explanation, he follows to a great extent Bertinoro but also deviates from him often, adding more plausible interpretations either borrowed from later commentators or his own. Besides, Bertinoro based his own interpretation on that of Maimonides and followed him almost to the exclusion of the views of others. Our commentator, who is impartial, quotes, whenever necessary, several explanations, thus giving readers a selection. In that part of the commentary which deviates from the one of Bertinoro, the author utilized especially the comments on the Mishnah of the Gaon of Wilna which are very valuable and also drew upon the work of his contemporary, the great Rabbinic scholar, Akiba Eger (see below).

Lifshitz possessed a considerable amount of secular education, was versed especially in mathematics, and in general was of a modern turn of mind. He utilized this knowledge in the commentary. The mathematical passages in the Mishnah, and they are many, are explained by him with great lucidity and clearness, and he also provided drawings and figures. He further gives the translation into German of many names of plants and utensils which are not commonly known. He was also one of the few Rabbinic scholars who considered the proper pronunciation of the Mishnaic words as necessary both for the study and understanding of the text. He, therefore, obtained an old edition of a vocalized Mishnah and following it, vocalized all the words which are, as a rule, mispronounced by most students, and he thus helped to popularize the grammatical

and correct reading of the Mishnah. Of special merit are the summaries of legal decisions which he affixed at the end of each chapter of the orders *Zeraim* and *Moed*. These orders deal with the religious laws applying to every day life—especially the second—and the summaries of decisions aid the student to guide himself in his daily conduct, for the decisions are rendered according to the final view.

Of great value are his introductions to several of the orders of the Mishnah, notably to the second and the sixth, *Moed* and *Taharot*. The introduction to the former which deals with the Sabbath and the festivals gives a comprehensive statement of the principles involved in the various groups of laws included in that order, their classification, and the definition of their concepts. The exposition is arranged according to a logical scheme and is systematically coordinated. A special chapter in that introduction is devoted to the Jewish calendar, which aims not only to acquaint the student with its principles but actually to teach him how, in case of need, to compose a calendar for himself. The introduction to *Taharot* is briefer, inasmuch as the laws of purity do not affect the daily conduct of the Jew for most of them are not practiced today, but it gives a clear exposition of the principles of these laws and a logical statement of the classification of the kinds of impurities. In this introduction the author draws upon the introduction of Maimonides to the same order, but he improves upon it, as he employs the modern scientific method of the detailed division of a subject into its ultimate component parts, and also gives a more popular statement of the principles and concepts.

Lifshitz did not neglect the Agada and devoted to it as much energy as to the Halakah. His commentary on *Abot* (The Sayings of the Fathers) the only Mishnaic treatise dealing purely with Agadic matters, contains a masterly presentation of the ethical teachings of the Rabbis. It is permeated with a spirit of rationalism and displays a high ethical sense. We will quote by way of illustration of its character, one of his comments on the second Mishnah of the first chapter. The Mishnah reads: "He (Simon the Just) used to say: 'the world is sustained by three things, Torah, *Abodah*, i.e. worship, and acts of loving kindness.'" To this our commentator remarks, "The 'world' mentioned here signifies the world of each individual man and not the cosmos. The purpose of man's life is to perfect his soul by means of three things: by Torah which implies knowledge of all wisdom and sciences; by observance of the law which is expressed here by the term worship; and by cultivation of kindness and generosity,

connotated by the term *Gemilut Hassadim*." "By the acquisition of knowledge," continues the commentator, "man discharges his duty to himself; by observance of the law, he fulfills his duty to God; and by pursuing kindness, his obligations to society."

He did not overlook the question of the dogmas of Judaism which are referred to in the Mishnah (Sanhedrin, Ch. X, 1), and appended to the commentary, on the fourth Order, *Nezikin*, a discourse on immortality and resurrection—the latter being one of the principal dogmas mentioned in that Mishnaic statement—and he attempts to prove these beliefs from a rational point of view. The significant thing in this discourse, however, is not his proofs for immortality and resurrection, but his attempt to reconcile the traditional view that the world exists only five thousand six hundred and forty years (the time when he wrote the commentary) with the data of geological science. He quotes a number of such data which prove the exceptionally long age of the world. He accepts the data as true, but explains them in an interesting way. He believes that the world underwent a series of cataclysms, and after each cataclysm, it was re-established by the will of God in a more perfect form. The present world is the fourth in the series and it is this kind of creation that the first chapter in Genesis tells us of. He, of course, interprets the verses of that chapter accordingly. It was the first attempt made in the Modern Period by a Rabbinic scholar of orthodox views to adjust the account of creation in Genesis to the conceptions of science.

In view of all the enumerated qualities of this commentary, we can readily acclaim it as a leading contribution to the Rabbinic literature of the period and of permanent value and service. It helps the student who cannot devote a great part of his time to Talmudics not only to understand the Mishnah, but with the help of the introductions and summaries, also to comprehend the Halakah in general as well as to know the decision of the law in regard to important matters of religious life.

Of the many other collections of comments and notes on the Mishnah, there is to be noted the *Tosofot* (Additions and Glosses) by Akiba Eger, one of the leading Talmudists during the first half of the last century. These additions, though more of the type of the *novellae*, aim primarily to straighten out difficulties in Bertinoro's commentary and Heller's *Tosofot*. Yet it has great value of commentation for many of the remarks really offer improved interpretations of passages in the Mishnah or otherwise elucidate the meaning

of Halakic statements. In fact, as already mentioned, Lifshitz acknowledges his debt to Eger's comments, a number of which he incorporated in his own work.

105. COMMENTARIES ON THE CODES

Of the commentaries on the codes, especially on that of Karo, the *Shulhan Aruk*, the following two are of great importance, the *Peri Megadim* (Sweet Fruits) on the second part of that code named *Yore Dea* and the *Keẓot ha-Hoshen* on the third part, the *Hoshen Mishpat*. The first was written by Joseph Teomim (d. 1792), a teacher in Lemberg, who later became a member of a private academy supported by Daniel Jaffe Itzig, a patron of learning at Berlin, and ultimately rabbi at Frankfort on the Oder. It was intended as a supercommentary on the two standard commentaries of that part of the code, *Shak* and *Taz* (Vol. II, Sec. 65), and as the author explains in his preface; his purpose was (a) to explain the difficult passages in these commentaries; (b) to straighten out difficulties or remove contradictions in their statements; (c) to add some decisions in certain phases of the law which the authors overlooked; (d) to add some new decision of his own and to correct erroneous references. These aims are carried out by the author, and the work really elucidates the standard commentaries. It is, however, permeated by the casuistic spirit of the time, and a great part of it is devoted to the solving of problems raised by the author himself rather than to the explanation of the commentaries. But such a procedure was considered commentation in the broad sense of the word. The principle with these writers was that the views of the authors whom they chose to interpret must be defended no matter how artificial that defense might be.

The particular merit of this commentary is the introduction it contains to each section of laws included in the *Yore Dea*. Teomim was not only a Talmudic scholar but was also versed in Hebrew grammar and had a knowledge of the rudiments of logic. It is this tendency towards rational thinking which is displayed in the introductions, for on the whole, they present a logical exposition of the fundamental principles and concepts underlying the group of laws. At times, however, the exposition is interrupted by casuistic comments. When a certain section contains a variety of legal statements, special short introductions are prefixed by the author to each subdivision of the section.

Teomim also wrote a similar supercommentary on the two standard commentaries on the first part of the code, the *Orah Hayyim*, namely the *Taz*, and the *Magen Abraham*. The introduction to that work contains a number of ethical and grammatical discussions which prove his mastery of the subjects. His fame, however, is based on the *Peri Megadim*, for in this work, his scholarship is primarily evident though he wrote many other works in Rabbinics. He also composed a lexicographical treatise entitled *Em la-Binah* (literally Mother of Understanding) where he discusses the meaning of a number of words in Hebrew, Aramaic, and the Talmudic dialect, arranged in alphabetical order. Unfortunately, the work was never published and remained in manuscript.

The *Keẓot ha-Hoshen* was written by Aryē Leib Cohen also at first a teacher at Lemberg and later rabbi of the Jewish community at Stry, Galicia. The work is primarily of the type of *novellae*, yet it can be considered as a commentary on the text of the third part of the *Shulhan Aruk* proper, though only of a certain kind. That part deals with civil law, a subject which is not only extensive, but also intensive in its logical aspects and rational concepts. Our author's work can, therefore, be considered a commentary for it is devoted to the elucidation of the legal concepts which form the basis of the laws and views embodied in that part of the code. With exceptional acumen, Cohen analyzes the views of Karo as well as those of Isserlis (Rama'a, Vol. II, Sec. 60), the joint authors of the code, as well as those of the principal commentators, Sabbatai Cohen and Joshua Falk (*Shak* and *Sem'a*, Vol. II, Sec. 65) and clarified their meaning. He is especially distinguished by his fine dissection of all legal concepts into their component parts and by his pointing out the differences in two apparently analogous cases. By this penetrating analytical method, he was able to solve many problems and remove contradictions in the statements of the authors of the code itself, those of their commentators, and also of many earlier scholars whose decisions served as a basis for the *Shulhan Aruk*. The brilliancy evinced in this work aroused the admiration of both his contemporaries and his successors. The *Keẓot ha-Hoshen* became a subject of study in the East-European Talmudical academies during the nineteenth century and its method a model of imitation to young students in their own pursuit of Rabbinic learning. It had both beneficial and injurious effects upon study in these academies, for while the method undoubtedly made the intellectual power of the

students keener, it also caused them to spend excessive time in producing fine-spun differentiations between legal cases and in casuistic discussions with the result that the actual study of the Talmud and the codes was neglected. The work of Cohen, on account of its popularity, was one of the few later commentaries which was included in large editions of the code which were published during the second half of the last century.

106. COMMENTARIES ON MIDRASHIM

The Rabbinic scholars, as we know, were primarily interested in the Halakah, and only few paid attention to the Agada. For this reason, we see that while the Halakic books were constantly commented on, annotated and dealt with in numerous treatises, which we subsume under the general name of *novellae*, the great Agadic collections, the Midrashim, were comparatively neglected. There are but few real commentaries on the Midrashim and most of these were written by scholars of the preceding period. Yet there were a number of savants in modern times who undertook to elucidate the Agada either by commentaries, or notes and glosses.

Of the commentaries, the two outstanding are, one written on the Large Midrashim (Midrash Rabba) by Wolf Einhorn entitled *Perush Maharsaw* (The Commentary of Zeeb Wolf), and the other on the *Tanhuma* (Vol. I, Sec. 83) under the name of *Ez Yoseph* (The Tree of Joseph) by Hanok Zundel ben Yoseph.

The first is a real commentary for it explains extensively the text of the Midrash and clarifies every difficult passage. The Midrash has many difficulties. It is, on the whole, brief in its interpretation of the verses of the Bible, and the reader is very often puzzled and cannot understand how the homily or the explanation is derived. Its diction contains many unknown words borrowed from the Greek or the Aramaic and usually given in a distorted form. The same interpretation or short homilies are given several times in various collections, at length and in abbreviated form. The earlier commentators, especially the author of the *Matnot Kehuna*, attended to a certain extent to all these matters, but the explanations are insufficient on account of their brevity inasmuch as they rely on the ingenuity of the reader. Einhorn intended his commentary for the average student and he is, therefore, careful to explain every passage at length. However, not wanting to duplicate comments, he usually comments upon the statements not referred to by his predecessors

unless he differs in interpretation. As a rule, he gives the reason for the Midrashic interpretation of the verse and explains how the homily is derived from the words of the Bible. Whenever an interpretation is abbreviated in one place and becomes unintelligible because of it, while it is given at length in another place, he quotes the more complete version. In general, he cites references to the parallel passages in the Midrashim and Agada of both Talmuds, the Babylonian and the Palestinian. He also pays attention to the correction of erroneous readings which are quite numerous in all the books of the *Midrash Rabba*. A valuable feature of the commentary is that it very often indicates the rules of interpretation of the Agadists. The Agadists employed in their interpretation of the Bible thirty-two rules. These rules were collected in a short treatise by Eliezer, the son of Jose the Galilean, a Tanna of the second century. Einhorn printed that treatise as an introduction to his commentary with explanatory notes. In the commentary proper, he often indicates according to what rule a certain Midrashic interpretation was given. In the explanation of the terms and expressions of the Midrash, especially those of Greek and Aramaic origin, our author relies, of course, primarily on the *Aruk* by Nathan ben Yehiel, and the later editions to that lexicon. In this, however, he falls short, for he lacks the philological knowledge necessary for this phase of commentation.

The *Ez Yoseph* falls much below the commentary of Einhorn. It is brief and insufficient, yet since it is practically the only commentary on the *Tanḥuma*—at least on the printed version—it is of help to the reader in his understanding of the meaning of the text. In addition to the commentary, the author added also homiletic notes on that Midrash where he gives longer interpretations of selected passages. These he calls by a separate title, *Anaf Yoseph* (The Branch of Joseph).

Valuable notes, glosses, and comments were also written by two scholars who devoted themselves to the study of the Agada, David Luria and Samuel Strashun (1794-1872). Both collections are called by similar names, the first *Hidushē ha-Radal* (Novellae of David Luria), and the second *Hidushē ha-Rashash* (Novellae of Samuel Strashun). Both contribute much to the correction of the text by citing references and by explaining difficult passages. Luria wrote also an extensive commentary on *Pirkē di Rabbi Eliezer* (Vol. I, Sec. 87) a late Midrash ascribed to Eliezer ben Hyrcanus, a Tanna of the second generation.

B. CODES

107. *THE ḤAYYĒ-ADAM*

Of the writing or composing of new codes during the Modern Period, it is hardly possible to speak, for since the *Shulḥan Aruk* was accepted as the final code of Israel, no other compilation of laws received any authoritative status. The later works of codification were mere commentaries upon and additions to the Code of Karo rather than independent treatises. However, there was room for abridgments and popularizations of that very *Shulḥan Aruk*. That stupendous work with its numerous commentaries became, in spite of the intention of the author (see Vol. II, pp. 145-146), a subject of deep study for Rabbinic students. The layman who wanted to know the actual rules of conduct could hardly find his way in it on account of the opposing views of the commentators who often complicated matters. There was a need for a short code which should give in plain unequivocal terms the actual rules of conduct. This need was filled by Abraham Danzig (1748-1820), a disciple of Ezekiel Landau (Vol. II, p. 189) who occupied the position of Dayyan in the Jewish community of Wilna in the time of the Gaon. He composed two improved abridgments of the first two parts of the *Shulḥan Aruk*, the *Orah Ḥayyim* and the *Yore Dea*. The first is called *Ḥayyē Adam* (The Life of Man) and the second *Ḥokmat Adam*. The former deals with all religious laws bearing upon prayers, benedictions, the Sabbath, and festivals; the latter covers all phases of dietary laws and subjects which require the expert opinion of a rabbi. The *Ḥayyē Adam* because of the fact that it deals with such laws that are practiced daily by every observant Jew and are of a simple nature, became one of the most popular books and was found in almost every Jewish home.

In his preface to this work, the author explains the need for an abridged code for the layman and illustrates his argument by a very fine parable which deserves quoting. Suppose, says he, one wants to learn the craft of tailoring which, of course, cannot be accomplished without the use of a needle, and if such a man instead of centering his attention upon learning to ply the needle would decide to investigate how that most necessary instrument is made, he would have to spend considerable time in learning about the manufacture of needles which in turn would imply the study of the instruments em-

ployed for that purpose. Again, since needles are manufactured of iron, he would have to learn all about the composition of ore. The results of all these investigations would be that he would have to spend a lifetime in learning and never become a tailor. The application is quite evident; the layman who wants to know the law and has little time for intensive study cannot investigate the various views given in the commentaries of the code and certainly not the sources upon which the authors of the code drew; still more is it impossible for him to derive the decision from the Talmud. He must have a ready-made instrument and use it. This instrument, the author says, is the *Ḥayyē Adam*.

We must admit that as an efficient legal manual it possesses many qualities. First, it gives the final decision according to the latest interpretations with all the additions introduced by the scholars who succeeded the composition of the *Shulḥan Aruk*, and without any differences of opinion; second it presents a great improvement on the former in the arrangement of the laws. It is not a mere abridgment and the author follows the *Shulḥan Aruk* only in its general division but not section by section. Within its divisions, the laws are rearranged in a more logical way. This rearrangement is especially evident in the Sabbath laws where the order of the *Shulḥan Aruk* is deficient. Danzig follows the order of the Code of Maimonides and presents a coherent conception of the laws of the Sabbath. He also, in order to make the daily religious life of the Jew more complete, excerpted some laws from the second part of the Code of Karo, the *Yore Dea*, and inserted them in his compendium. Thus, the laws concerning the study of the Torah, honoring father and mother, respect to scholars, etc. which are placed in the second part of the *Shulḥan Aruk* are included in the *Ḥayyē Adam* among the laws of daily conduct. In addition, the author is careful to state the reason for each law and indicate its status whether it is of Biblical origin, a Rabbinical ordinance, a popular custom, or one merely adopted by excessively pious men.

The value of this compendium is enhanced by its ethical tone and pedagogic devices employed by the author. It is not his purpose to merely state the law in a matter-of-fact manner, but also to inculcate it in the hearts of the readers, and whenever possible he intersperses passages of an ethical and pietistic character wherein he calls upon men not only to observe the law but to be saturated with the love of

God and men. He also points out that these are the purposes for which the laws were given to the Jews.

Danzig did not rise above his time, and like all the Rabbinic scholars of his day, believed in the authenticity of the Kabbala and was a follower of its teachings. He, therefore, quotes in his work from time to time passages from the *Zohar* or other Kabbalistic works for the purpose of emphasizing the value of the observance of a certain law or to indicate the loss resulting from its transgression, but does not allow the mystic teachings to influence his decisions of the laws. All Kabbalistic interpretations of the performance of precepts or deviations in such observance, even if mentioned in the *Ḥayyē Adam* are as a rule, given in parenthesis to indicate that they do not belong to the text. Yet, at times, a mystic view found its place in the text proper but as a rule when such opinion imparts a special value to a religious performance as in the following instance: "The order of the morning prayers," says our author, "is divided into four parts corresponding to the four worlds, the existence of which is posited by the mystics, namely the world in which we live (*Olam ha-Ze*), the world of the spheres, the world of the angels, and the upper world where the presence of God (*Shekinah*) dwells. The division also corresponds to the body and the three parts of the soul, *Nefesh* (lower soul), *Ruah* (Spirit), and *Neshamah* (higher soul of man). By praying reverently and with devotion, man increases the power of sanctity in each world and unites with it and also ennoble each of the four parts of his own being."¹ Such a statement endows prayer with an inner meaning and raises it above the mere performance of a law to a religious act of the highest order.

The *Hokmat Adam* dealing, as said, with laws of a different order is intended more as a *vade mecum* for rabbis whose function is to decide ritual questions in matters of dietary laws and similar subjects. It follows the same methods and possesses similar qualities as the *Ḥayyē Adam*.

Both compendia, though they aim to give the decision without any discussion are, however, provided also with a number of scholarly notes where the author, selecting certain points in the text, discusses them at length in an erudite manner. This was done by him for the purpose of justifying a certain decision which deviates somewhat from the view of earlier codifiers. The notes are given separate

¹ *Ḥayyē Adam*, Sec. 1.

titles in each of the compendia, *Nishmat Adam* in the first and *Binat Adam* in the second.

Another abridged code which gained great popularity is the *Kizur Shulhan Aruk* by Solomon Ganzfried (1804-1886). This work was intended by the author as a manual for the layman of all laws which affect not only the daily life of the individual Jew but to a degree also certain phases of Jewish family and social life. The principle of the author seems to have been to include all such laws which, because of the simplicity of their nature, even a moderately learned layman can render decision in matters covered by them. Its scope is, therefore, wider than that of the *Hayyē Adam* and even includes subjects not dealt with in the *Hokmat Adam*. On the other hand, it omits all dietary laws and kindred subjects which require the decision of a rabbi. The author abridged the entire first part of the *Shulhan Aruk*, the *Orah Hayyim*, dealing with the order of the prayers, the Sabbath and the festivals, and added further abridgment of selected sections from the other three parts of the code, such as laws concerning the salting of meat and food prepared by gentiles, laws of charity, of vows and oaths, and of mourning, from the *Yore Dea*; laws concerning marriage from the fourth part, and even a number of civil laws governing the conduct in daily business from the third part of the code. In addition, he included few sections on ethical conduct culled from various Rabbinical works and especially from the Code of Maimonides.

Its arrangement is not determined by any logical principle and the groups of laws are rather loosely connected. Its style, though precise, is on the whole dry and very seldom adorned with expressions or phrases of an emotional character. The spirit permeating the work is of extreme religious rigorousness, for Ganzfried belonged to the ultra-Orthodox faction of Hungarian Jewry, and any leniency in legal decisions could hardly be expected from him. However, due to its comprehensiveness, compactness, and precision in decision, the abridgment filled a certain need in the life of the pious Jews and like the *Hayyē Adam* was a household book with a large number of Jewish families.

Of the numerous partial legal manuals written by many scholars, the following two attained popularity and were accepted as the last word in legal decision on the subjects they deal with, the *Derek ha-Hayyim* (The Way of Life) by Jacob Lissa (d. 1838) and the *Tib Gittin* (The Order of the Rules for Bills of Divorce) by Zalman

Margolis (1762-1828). The first is a manual of all laws concerning the daily life of the individual Jews written in a brief and precise manner, and because of the authority of the author and the character of the work, it was incorporated in a special edition of the prayer-book, known as the *Siddur Derek ha-Hayyim*. The same scholar wrote many other works, among them commentaries and *novellae* to the four parts of the *Shulhan Aruk* the most important of which is the one on the *Hoshen Mishpat* entitled *Netivot ha-Mishpat* (The Ways of Judgment).

The second work deals, as its name indicates, with the rules of writing bills of divorce. It pays special attention to the orthography of the various names of men and women, a subject which gave much trouble to rabbis, especially at the beginning of the Modern Period, on account of the general introduction of family names. It is interesting to note that this great scholar who wrote many Rabbinic treatises which were considered authoritative by the learned of several generations never filled a Rabbinical position but engaged in commerce all his life.

C. RESPONSA

108. GENERAL FEATURES

The Responsa literature produced during the Modern Period is extensive, for almost every rabbi of importance thought it his duty to collect his legal correspondence and publish it. However, judging this type of literary production as a whole, we can say that its quality falls much below that of the preceding period for a number of reasons. The first is the narrowing of the scope of decision in matters of religious questions on the part of the individual rabbi. The standardization of the codes and the constant additional decisions on all phases of the law by the numerous authoritative commentators left little room for the opinions of the scholar. Unless the respondent was a man of courage who dared in certain cases to dissent from the accepted view, he had no other way but to point out to the inquirer the decisions of the codes or the printed additions to them with very little change. The second factor is the narrowing of the sphere of Jewish life during the period. The autonomy of the Jewish communities was constantly shrinking. The conduct of Jewish communal affairs was placed under the supervision of the

governments and the officers were no more responsible to Jewish authorities except by voluntary consent, and the Kehillah lost many of its former prerogatives. Similarly, under conditions of modern life, the members of the communities were free from the authority of its officers in all things relating to their private life, and thus the influence of Jewish law upon life was greatly limited.

As a result of these conditions, the Responsa do not reflect all phases of Jewish life as heretofore and their scope is considerably circumscribed and is limited more to purely religious subjects, to family laws, and to matters of civil law as affecting the individual. Still, inasmuch as the cases dealt with in the Responsa arose from life, these collections do mirror Jewish life and conditions in the various countries of Eastern Europe to a certain extent, and the echoes of the changes which entered into that life during the period under discussion are likewise heard in them, though not clearly. They reverberate especially in cases affecting family life and the Sabbath laws in which the economic factor played a great role, and to a lesser extent in civil laws. The purely religious laws were affected little by the changed conditions and most of the Responsa dealing with such matters are of a theoretical nature. In fact, there are numerous collections of Responsa which hardly deserve that name, inasmuch as they are more of the type of *novellae* and deal with hypothetical cases of religious laws and have little practical bearing.

The Responsa concerning cases of family laws which occupy a large part in most of the leading collections deal mainly with cases of *Agunot* i.e. cases where the testimony about the death of the husband is not given with certainty and the woman wants to remarry, or cases where the husband appeals to the rabbi to allow him to transgress the ban (*Herem*) of Rabbi Gershon (Vol. I, Sec. 141) against bigamy since the wife is incapacitated mentally and cannot be given a divorce. Similarly, there are cases where the abolition of another ordinance of the same Rabbi Gershon is asked for, namely the one prohibiting the divorce of a woman against her will. However, when the wife is sick physically, or conducts herself otherwise in a manner which makes it impossible to live with her and she refuses to take a divorce, a question arises whether the ordinance cannot be set aside, and the correspondents plead for such action. The increase of such inquiries was primarily due to new conditions of life brought about by immigration, change of occupation, and

kindred causes. There are also numerous cases of divorce complicated by modern conditions, such as sending divorce bills by post, or the writing of non-Jewish names of the husband and the wife, and similar matters. Many divorce and marriage cases involve questions concerning laxity in morality, which show the effects of the contact with modern "civilization" and the breaking down of the rigorous sanctity of the family. There are numerous cases of marriage ceremonies performed in a playful mood between young men and women, and their validity is questioned.

It is to be noted that these Responsa, unlike those of the earlier periods, contain little of non-Halakic matter. There are no inquiries concerning views and opinions which relate to historical and grammatical matters, as we find in the collections of Mediaeval scholars (Vol. II, Sec. 67). Even the great movements which took place in the nineteenth century in Jewish life hardly find an echo in these works. Only several Responsa in the collection of Moses Sofer (see below) refer to the attempted religious reforms. It is true that the orthodox rabbis of Germany and Hungary issued a special collection on such matters which was discussed above (Sec. 71), but these should also have found a place in the regular collections of Responsa and yet they are comparatively free from such discussions. It seems that these worthy rabbis lived in a world of their own, bound by the "four ells of the Halakah" and disregarded everything else beyond these confines, no matter how deeply it affected Jewish religious views and practices. The wisdom of such a policy is undoubtedly questionable.

On the whole, a spirit of rigorousness permeates these Responsa, which was probably due to a reaction against the general levity in matters of religion noted in modern times. These rabbis wanted to show that in spite of all arguments of reformers, semi-reformers, and would-be reformers, little is to be changed. Yet as will be seen under the pressure of economic conditions cases affected by them are dealt with in a more lenient spirit.

Most of the collections of Responsa were considered by contemporaries and even by successors as mere Rabbinic treatises which are to be judged according to their merits and the quality of learning displayed therein, but little authority was attached to them and they were infrequently made the basis of further discussion. A number of these collections, however, written by the outstanding savants of the several generations included in this span of time were given

the status of authority, both by colleagues and successors, and their decisions are often referred to in other works. It is to these leading collections that our brief survey shall be limited.

109. *RESPONSA COLLECTIONS OF AKIBA EGER AND MOSES SOFER*

The first of these is the collection of Responsa by Akiba Eger (1761-1837), one of the leading Rabbinic authorities in the first quarter of the last century. He was rabbi in several important Jewish communities in Germany and finally in Posen. It might have been expected that the legal correspondence of a man of great fame and learning would be voluminous, for undoubtedly many rabbis turned to him for decision and guidance in perplexing questions. The case, however, is not so. Only one volume of his Responsa was published in 1835 which contains one hundred and fifty-one replies to queries on various matters affecting all phases of Jewish law, religious, family, and civil. Whether more Responsa were left in manuscript is not known, for the volume went through several editions and the sons of the writer who were the editors, added little to the Responsa proper except a number of *novellae* of purely theoretical character.

His Responsa are distinguished not only by great learning but also by their comparative brevity. Eger, unlike many of his contemporaries, does not engage in long casuistic discourses which aim more to display the mental keenness of the respondent than an attempt to decide the case in hand, but approaches the question directly, quotes authorities, offers his decision, and advances several arguments for his opinion. In complicated cases, where the views of earlier authorities are not clearly stated, and a decision can be reached only by analogy or analysis of similar cases, he follows the usual Rabbinic method, but even then he exercises economy in his arguments. Being a man of piety, he follows in his decisions the earlier authorities, yet on a number of occasions he manifests a spirit of independence and inclines towards leniency even against the opinions of accepted authorities. This tendency is especially manifested in cases of family laws, where a rigorous decision would result in suffering for the woman. A decision of note in such matters is the one which allows a groom to insert a condition at the time of the consecration of the bride (*Kiddushin*) that in case he dies without issue during the life of his brother or brothers, the marriage

is retrogressively nullified (No. 93). Were such decisions followed and the practice instituted, many heart-breaking tragedies in Jewish life would have been avoided, for then the childless widow would not have been subjected to the ceremony of *Halizah** and would not have been at the mercy of heartless brothers-in-law.

There is little of the historical in Eger's Responsa, nor do they throw any light upon special phases of Jewish life, nor reflect much the modern conditions. His views on reforms in Judaism, Eger expressed in several letters included in the controversial collection of Responsa on the subject which was discussed above. In his own Responsa, there is no reference to it. In spite of the fact that our author, on account of his modesty always cautions his correspondents not to accept his decisions as final and authoritative, his views were considered as such, and his Responsa were frequently quoted by contemporaries and successors.

More voluminous and considerably more diversified is the collection of Responsa by Moses Sofer, the son-in-law of Eger (1762-1839), rabbi of Pressburg. He was, like his father-in-law, a recognized Rabbinic leader in his generation, but displayed greater energy and activity in the struggle against the spirit of modernity in Jewish life, and especially against any attempt to change the *status quo* in religious practice even in the slightest degree. His fame spread far and wide and rabbis from many cities, from Hungary, Germany and even Poland turned to him in their perplexity and asked for his decision on all phases of Jewish law.

His collection entitled *Hatam Sofer* (the initials of the words *Hidushē Teshubot Moshe Sofer, Novellae* and Responsa of Moses Sofer) is divided in different editions into a varying number of volumes, two, four, and even six, but the general arrangement is a division into four parts, corresponding to the four parts of the *Shulhan Aruk*. Each of these parts deals with queries which bear upon laws included in the corresponding division of the code. All parts together contain 1377 Responsa.

The learning displayed in the Responsa is amazing. His knowledge of the entire field of Talmudic and Rabbinic literature is overwhelming and also his keen-mindedness in finding analogies to legal problems presented by life is very impressive. He is, on the whole, more lengthy in his replies than his father-in-law but in a moderate manner. The content of the inquiries is greatly diversified and reveal many

* For the explanation of this ceremony, see p. 364.

angles of the daily Jewish life in the communities of Hungary and parts of Germany. The echo of the change of conditions in that life is heard to a considerable extent. There is a case of a cantor whom the community accused of committing many transgressions of the law, among them adultery and stealing, and yet he insisted on retaining his position. Sofer, of course, decides that he be removed (Part I, No. 11). Again, there is a query from a Jewish community which wants to know how to deal with their rabbi whose conduct in religious matters is not in accordance with the orthodox view, and further that he is exceptionally lenient in his decisions and that his views on certain dogmas are too radical. The decision is that he be removed (Part III, No. 162). Inquiries regarding infractions of the laws of morality affecting the family relations are considerable in the collections. We hear also the echo of incipient reforms in religious law. The Consistory of Westphalia, most likely under the influence of Israel Jacobson, the well-known initiator of the Reform movement, decides to allow the use of peas and beans on Passover—the prohibition of such use being only the practices of the Franco-German Jewry, but not of the Sephardic—. Sofer opposes such innovation and disregards the decision of that consistory though he does not condemn it with his usual severity as in other cases. (Part I, No. 122).

Being the champion of a rigid orthodox view of Judaism, he is very rigorous in his decisions and opposes every attempted change in practice, especially when it affects synagogue ritual and order, the bone of contention between the two parties in Jewry in those days. An inquiry reached him from a community regarding the change of the place of the platform for the reading of the law from the middle of the synagogue to the upper part near the ark. He opposes such change, though he cannot find sufficient legal authority for such prohibition, but merely because it was the practice in German Jewry for generations. On this occasion, he pronounces his maxim which served him as a guiding rule in such matters, namely that innovation in religious practice is prohibited by the Torah, i.e. Biblically (*Hodosh Asur min ha-Torah*; Part I, No. 28).² Similarly, he is rigorous regarding the covering of the hair of women and decides that not a single hair should be seen, though, according to the Talmud, women are permitted to uncover a part of their hair between

² There is a play upon the words. This statement is applied in the Talmud to the use of new grain before the *Omer* was brought on the second day of Passover. Sofer gave the word *שדך* a turn and uses it in a general sense to signify everything new.

the ears and the forehead, yet, since the *Zohar* prohibits it, and since such was the custom of pious women, he is also inclined to uphold it (Ibid., No. 36). His severity in such matters often reaches an excessive degree. Thus, he opposes the decision of a rabbi who allowed the writing of a bill of divorce on the second day of Shebuot so as to spare a woman the search for her brother-in-law in distant lands in order to be freed from him through *Halizah*. Sofer's view is that it must not be allowed under any circumstances no matter how pressing the need may be, for the second day of the holidays is valid in its sanctity even today when we know the exact calculation of the calendar (Part I, No. 145).

Yet this rigorous champion of custom and practice relaxes his severe attitude when the cases affect laws which are of greater importance, but a certain looseness in their observance had become rather wide-spread under pressure of economic necessity or popular demand. He is inclined to allow the use of a parasol on the Sabbath—in places where carrying things on the Sabbath is permitted—provided a Gentile opens it (Part I, No. 72). Many other authorities prohibited it and such practice was not allowed in Jewish communities in Poland and Lithuania, but in Hungary people practiced it. He is likewise lenient in regard to allowing the construction on the Sabbath by Gentile laborers of buildings belonging to Jews, and under certain conditions permits even a synagogue to be thus built. (Ibid., No. 61.) Similarly, he is inclined to allow the clipping of the beard as closely as possible even if it does resemble actual shaving by a razor, and reprimands a certain rabbi for protesting against such practice (Ibid., No. 159). On the whole, he is also lenient in decisions in cases of family laws, and he endeavors to avoid separation of families; in cases where the uncertainty of the husband's death is involved, he is inclined to allow the woman to remarry if there is only a possible legal basis for such decision. His severity is primarily expressed in matters of purely religious law, and often more in the observance of customs than laws.

Sofer undoubtedly possessed a great mind which penetrated deeply into many a complicated problem, yet his piety frequently mastered his reasoning powers and subjected them to irrational beliefs. Thus, he expresses with a remarkable naïveté that nature is subjected to the Torah and that some natural phenomena change in accordance with the enactment of certain laws in matters of religious observance. It is true that such a view was referred to in earlier legal treatises

but its acceptance, at a time, when the general scientific concepts of the stability of nature became a part of the mental equipment even of the ordinary man arouses our amazement. It can be explained only by the fact that his devotion to the Torah and his complete belief in the efficacy of the law swayed him at times from the path of reason, and that such contradictions in the human soul are not entirely new.

Of his controversy against the Reform movement and especially against the arguments advanced by the champions of innovations from Rabbinic sources there is a slight echo in this collection of Responsa. It contains only one Responsum (Part IV, No. 191), where Sofer attempts to refute the views of Rabbi Aaron Chorin, the advocate of reform in religious practices, advanced by him in his pseudepigraphic treatise (*Iggeret Al-Asaf*) discussed by us above (Sec. 72). The main discussion centers around the question whether prayer with uncovered head is permissible or not. Sofer admits that there is no strict legal prohibition against such practice, but the age-long custom forbids it. He also discusses the fundamental question whether the rabbis are allowed to introduce any changes in religious practices, if the times demand it, a principle which Chorin defended at length in his treatise. Unfortunately the refutation of Sofer is neither thorough nor systematically presented.

The great learning of the author, his piety, and his vigorous defense of the staunch orthodox type of Judaism, gave to the collection a status of authority, and the views were frequently referred to by successors as deciding factors in similar cases.

110. RESPONSA COLLECTIONS BY RUSSIAN SCHOLARS

The Polish-Russian center of Jewish learning produced many collections of Responsa written by numerous learned scholars, but only a few attained authority. One of these is the *Bet ha-Levi* by Joseph Baer Soloveitchik, a leading savant in his time. He was the son-in-law of Rabbi Eliezer Isaac Shapiro, the head of the famous academy at Volozhin, Lithuania, and for a time was one of the teachers (Rosh Yeshibah) at that institution. Later he held Rabbinical positions at famous Jewish communities, such as Slutsk and Brest-Litowsk. He was famous among his contemporaries as a scholar possessing an exceptionally keen analytic mind.

The *Bet ha-Levi* can be called a collection of Responsa only by

courtesy for though its subtitle reads *Shēolot u-Teshubot* (Inquiries and Responsa), it is in reality a collection of Rabbinic discourses either on hypothetical cases or on selected Talmudic subjects. There is not a single Responsum addressed to an inquiring rabbi who asks for a decision in a case at hand. Yet, the analysis of certain legal concepts, the clarification of complicated legal subjects as found in the Talmud and as interpreted by later authorities, as well as the author's own interpretations of many statements in the codes, contributed greatly towards decisions by contemporaries and successors in numerous cases with which they had to deal. The work is, therefore, quoted many times in Rabbinic Responsa, and the views of Joseph Baer are cited as authoritative.

Of great importance and value are the several collections of Responsa by the famous rabbi of Kovno, one of the leading communities of Lithuania, Isaac Elhanan Spector (1817-1896). He was considered in his time, especially during the thirty-two years of his Rabbinate in that city, as the leading Rabbinic scholar of Russian Jewry, and was looked upon by tacit consent as the chief rabbi of the great Jewish center. His influence on the spiritual life of the Jews living in that wide empire was great both on account of his learning and his energetic activity. It was extended beyond the confines of Russia to the Jewish centers of Western Europe and to the newly-founded settlements in the United States.

It was, therefore, natural that rabbis from all parts of the world should turn to him for decisions on cases presented by conditions of life on which no definite statement could be found in the codes. His legal correspondence was accordingly very extensive, and a considerable part of it was published by him in several collections, entitled *Beer Yizhak*, *Nahal Yizhak*, and *En Yizhak* (The Well, Stream, and Fountain of Isaac respectively, with reference to his name). The first is arranged according to the four parts of the *Shulhan Aruk* as it deals with all phases of Jewish law; the second is devoted to cases in civil law exclusively; and the last deals with religious and family law, primarily with the latter.

The Responsa, as a rule, are given at great length and are very often divided into sections where each phase of the case is discussed extensively. At times, however, when the case was not a complicated one, the discussion is given briefly and is designated accordingly. The life reflected there is that of the Jewish communities in Russia at the time, but it reveals little of interest, whether from a historical

point of view or otherwise. There is also little of the effect of modern conditions of life upon change in Jewish law, except in some slight way of which the following case is an instance. In one of his Responsa, the rabbi accepts a photograph of a man, who was dragged out by the London police from the Thames, as sufficient proof for his identification as the deceased husband of a certain *Agunah*, and permits her to remarry (En Yizhak, part III, No. 51). This was an innovation in Jewish law which, as a rule, requires testimony of witnesses in such cases. In general, it can be said that our author displays an inclination towards leniency in his decisions, especially in *Agunah* cases. He was noted for that, and many women who received reports of the death of their absent husbands but which were not sufficiently corroborated by eye witnesses, turned to him for help in their plight. He spared no efforts in order to help these unfortunate women in their sad plight.

Isaac Elhanan was known as a man of broad views, and in his capacity as a leading rabbi, he participated in all Jewish activities, and, during the second half of the last century, often attuned his activities to the changed conditions of modern life. Yet surprisingly enough, the struggles, movements, and the spread of new ideas as well as all other vicissitudes do not find any place in these Responsa and are not even referred to. It seems that this great rabbi lived in two distinct worlds, that of the practical activity in which he adjusted himself, to an extent, to the modern spirit, and the Halakic or legal in which he had little to do with the raging currents of views and opinions in the outside world. The results of such a policy to Orthodox Judaism were disastrous, for while Isaac Elhanan and some of his learned colleagues undoubtedly exerted great influence in their life-time, both as Rabbinic scholars and as great personalities, their influence upon the intellectual development of the younger generation was very little. It is certainly to be regretted that these great scholars did not follow their Mediaeval predecessors and did not apply their reasoning powers to all phases of Judaism, the spiritual and intellectual, as well as to the religious and practical.

A noted collection of Responsa is the *Meshiv Dabar* by Naphtali Zebi Jehudah Berlin (1817-1893), who was the head of the Talmudic academy at Volozhin for a period of thirty-seven years until it was closed by the Russian government in 1891. The work consists of four parts corresponding to those of the *Shulhan Arukh*. On the whole, the Responsa are brief and do not discuss extraneous matters

but are limited to the cases in hand, except when the subject is a complicated one and the decision requires extensive proof. The changed conditions in Jewish life are more in evidence in Berlin's collection than in the others discussed hitherto, especially in a number of inquiries which came from rabbis of the United States. One rabbi in Charleston, South Carolina, wants to know whether Jews who desecrate the Sabbath publicly can be counted as members of a quorum for prayer (Minyan). Berlin answers in the negative (Part I, No. 9). We can imagine what would have become of the Orthodox congregations in this country were such decision followed; another proof that life is always stronger than authority. A rabbi from Cincinnati inquires whether he can permit the institution of public readings from the Torah on Sunday, as insisted upon by a leading member of the congregation (Part I, No. 16.) Berlin disapproves of such innovation and is amazed at the demand. The naïve scholar did not know that the motive for the desire to institute such an innovation was to make the morning services on Sunday more dignified in order to attract a larger attendance to the synagogue on that day, which was adopted as a substitute for the Sabbath by a large number of Jews. Berlin was usually very rigorous in his decisions, though he was a man of broad views and was interested in other studies besides Rabbinics, such as Hebrew grammar and ethics. Like Sofer before him, he forbids the change of the platform on which the law is read (Bimah) from the center of the synagogue to the upper part because it is an innovation, and innovations are prohibited in religious practices (Ibid, 15). He was also one of the rabbis who prohibited the Palestinian colonists to till the soil on the Sabbatical year, in spite of the fact that he was a supporter of the *Hobebē Zion* (Palestinian) movement. He disagrees with many of his colleagues who allowed such work on account of the economic conditions in the Holy Land, especially since the new settlements were still in their infancy and a forced rest of a year might endanger their existence. To Berlin the law is supreme (Part II, No. 57), and he advises to ask the generous Baron de Rothschild, who supported the colonies, to assign a special sum for the maintenance of the colonists in that year. However, as his other colleagues, he was lenient in matters of family law and especially in cases of *Agunot*.

On the other hand, on account of his interest in other branches of Jewish learning, the *Meshiv Dabar* contains a number of non-Halakic

Responsa, one dealing with the phraseology in certain prayers which Berlin explains according to the usage of the language (Part I, No. 14); another discusses a question of Hebrew syntax (Part II, No. 119); and several interpret Agadic passages (Part I, No. 32; III, No. 107). In one of such Responsa, he discusses the question raised by a periodical, the organ of the Orthodox party in Galicia, regarding the right, left, and the middle-way parties in Judaism. To him the right are not the mere orthodox Jews, as the editor of that periodical averred, but the mystically religious whose sole thought is to commune with God; the left again are not the reformers, but those rationalists who are observers of the law but are not permeated with a mystic love of God; the middle-way party are the ordinary Jews who are otherwise pious but are engaged all day in business or work. As for those who are non-observers, they are beyond the pale of religious Jews. Yet, he warns against separation even from these, as advocated by the editor of that paper. In our state of exile, says he, Jewry must not be broken up in parties and factions estranged from each other. Such a case, he asserts, is dangerous and concludes his Responsum with the advice to increase the study of the Torah as this is the most effective means to strengthen the Jewish religion (Part I, No. 44).

We shall close our survey of this work by citing an inquiry which is a curious one and arouses our interest. It came from Tiberias in Palestine. The case was as follows: A Jew, who was known as a scholar and a man of piety sold to a neighbor half of his reward in the world to come for the sum of twenty-two thousand roubles (\$11,000). The buyer paid half of the sum and promised to pay the balance later. Meanwhile, he consulted another scholar on the matter, and the latter made "inquiries" in heaven regarding the status of the seller, and the answer was that he does not rank high among the righteous. The purchaser then attempted to annul the deal and asked for the return of his money; the seller, on the other hand, demanded the balance due him. The rabbi of Tiberias applied then to Berlin for a decision in the matter. Our author, in his reply, discusses the case from all angles, whether "futures" can in general be sold, and even if we were to assume that they can, whether reward for the study of the Torah can be transferred, for such reward is merely a spiritual exultation, and the man who cannot attain that degree will not benefit by that transfer. He finally comes to the conclusion that reward for observance of precepts cannot be sold,

for it is only a necessary result of the performance just as the effect produced by medicine upon the sick. Consequently, just as medicine given to one sick man can avail little to one who is not affected by that disease, likewise, reward of *Mizwot* earned by one will not help the other who did not perform them. He therefore decides that the sale is not valid (Part III, 14).

Berlin wrote also a commentary on the early code, *Sheiltoth* by Aḥai Gaon (Vol. I, Sec. 152), and one on the Pentateuch. The first is entitled *Ha'amek Shealah* (Deep Discussion), and the second *Ha'amek Dabar* (Deep Word). In the latter he evinces besides a mastery of the interpretation of the Pentateuch as given in Talmudic literature also an extensive acquaintance with Hebrew grammar and the use of the language.

III. BOOKS ON METHODOLOGY

A number of scholars expressed their contribution to Rabbinic literature by treatises which are neither Responsa nor collections of *Novellae*, but aid towards an understanding of Talmudic methodology though they deal only partly with that subject proper. One of such noted works is the *Melo ha-Ro'im* (The Assembly of the Shepherds) by Jacob Zebi Jolles. The work is divided into three parts, the first of which deals with a number of legal subjects and concepts which are discussed throughout the Talmud in various places. The author gives the references to all the passages where such subjects or concepts are discussed, states briefly the differences of opinion on these matters advanced by the Amoraim and Tannaim, as well as the interpretations of the passages and the views by the leading commentators of the Talmud. The subjects are alphabetically arranged. The student is thus presented with the gist of Talmudic discussions and the interpretations on a large number of important subjects and concepts which form the frame-work of the entire Jewish law in all its phases. The value of the work consists in the fact that the discussions of subjects in the Talmud which are usually not stated in one place but scattered in numerous tractates, are here coordinated in a systematic way together with the different interpretations.

The second part is devoted to the presentation of the rules of interpretation of the Bible established and employed by the founders of the Talmud, both the Tannaim and Amoraim. It deals with the thirteen hermeneutic rules of Rabbi Ismael (Vol. I, Sec. 33) which

were accepted by all schools, as well as with the rules introduced by later savants. The last were a bone of contention among the Tannaim and the Amoraim, and our author gives all views on the subject. The alphabetical arrangement is also followed in the second part. This part contains a valuable appendix on the rules for the decision of the law as formulated in the Talmud. The third part contains additions to the subjects presented in the first two parts, where certain legal concepts and principles are analyzed and expounded in the best pilpulistic method of the day.

CHAPTER XIV

HOMILETIC LITERATURE

112. *INTRODUCTORY*

Preaching is an old institution in Israel and its origin can be traced to prophetic times. Consequently, its expression in literature is also of early date. Yet, we did not find it necessary to treat that expression as a special type of literary activity when presenting a survey of all forms of Jewish literature in the two preceding volumes, for the following reason. In both the Ancient and Mediaeval periods the lines of demarcation between that particular type of literary endeavor and others was not drawn fast, and, as a result, the homiletic strain in literature was not particularized as a distinct current but was usually combined with other spiritual and intellectual elements into a larger literary division. Thus, a great part of the extensive literary type called Agada is of homiletic origin. Yet, the Agada as such is not merely homiletics, but contains many other elements which give it a distinct character. Similarly, the ethical, the polemical, and the exegetical types of literary expression during the Mediaeval period contain a considerable homiletic element, but only as an ingredient combined with many others.

It was only towards the end of the Mediaeval Period, from the sixteenth century on, that numerous books containing collections of sermons began to appear—the number of such books in earlier centuries is, compared with the production in other fields of Jewish literature, insignificant—and gradually formed an extensive literature. This particular literary endeavor, however, was, for several centuries, primarily the share of the various Sephardic Jewries scattered after the expulsion over the lands of the East and several countries in Western and Southern Europe. The reason for the display of interest in preaching on the part of the Spanish Jews was that, long before the expulsion there was noticed, due to the frequent persecutions and massacres, a great decrease of Talmudic study among

the Jewish masses in Spain. The masses, therefore, had to satisfy their craving for religious instruction by means of the oral sermon. Hence, the popularity of the preacher among the Jews in that country. The expulsion and the subsequent tribulations of the exiles attending them in their new homes only increased both their ignorance of Jewish knowledge and their demand for frequent preaching, and the result was a considerable production of many homiletic works.

The case was different with the German-Polish Jewries. There, learning was still popular among the masses and public study was a daily feature in the life of almost every Jew, who usually devoted at least the hour between *Minḥah* and *Ma'arib* services to such pursuit besides the Saturday afternoons. The demand for preaching was, therefore, not so urgent, and the number of preachers not so great and correspondingly we have a smaller number of homiletic works.

It is to be noted that quantitatively the production of homiletic literature by the scholars and preachers of both Jewries from the sixteenth century to the eighteenth is quite imposing; qualitatively, however, it can hardly rise to the level reached by other literary branches, though exceptions occur. It is with the Modern Period in Jewish history that the sermon or the homiletic discourse rises to its important position in Jewish religious life, and correspondingly its literary expression assumes a definite shape and distinct character.

The center of homiletic literary productivity shifted during the Modern Period, just as the center of the entire Jewish literature and of active Jewish life in general, from the Sephardic to the German and East-European Jewries. The changes which entered Jewish life during the period under discussion brought also, as we know from all that was discussed in the preceding chapters, important changes in the religious, spiritual, and cultural aspects of both Jewries, though in different degrees. In Germany, the change was sudden and revolutionary, while in Eastern Europe it was more moderate and gradual. These differences in the cycle of vicissitudes which took place in the above-mentioned forms of life of the Jewries are reflected both in the type of preaching and in the variety of the character of its literatures which were simultaneously produced in both Jewish centers.

In Germany where the conditions described by us above (Ch. III), brought about great spiritual and intellectual fermentation resulting in cultural and religious movements which aimed at reconciling

Judaism with the modern spirit, the sermon came at once into prominence. It was considered, as we learn from the tale of the conflict between the parties, by the advocates of reform as the surest means for the rehabilitation of Jewish religious life, as its most effective expression, and as the best instrument for conveying religious instruction and inspiration. This view was later adopted also by the opponents of reform and even by the ultra-orthodox Jews, and all factions placed preaching in the center of their religious services. Due to the importance of the position of the sermon in Jewish religious life and to the language in which it was preached—as a rule in German—it acquired distinct literary features both in its form and content. Its style became polished and distinguished, the diction choice; it included poetic flights and, at times, also barbs of satire, the quality of humor, and the sublimity of oratory. This complexity of qualities in the form of the sermon is alone sufficient to impart to the homiletic works of the Modern Period, especially those written in German or in any other European language, a peculiarity which marks them as a distinct species in literature. However, there is still more complexity to their content.

The sermon as a means of religious instruction as well as of inspiration, though vastly different from the homiletic Agada (Vol. I, Sec. 55) of old, yet retained the essential characteristics of the latter and its close relation to the Bible and to the fundamental teachings and views of Judaism as embodied in Jewish literature, including the Agada itself. It possessed then the fundamental trait of exposition either of the Bible or of later writings. But inasmuch as its function was mainly to apply these teachings to conditions in a modern world, it had also to take into account the complexity of modern knowledge, the new ethical concepts, the philosophical views and ideas of social life, and accepted scientific notions and theories. Again, since the general tendencies of the sermons were to reconcile the teachings of Judaism with modern views or prove their compatibility with them, these teachings were never presented in their pristine purity as embodied in the traditional writings, but always with a certain coloring, and much more was derived by the preacher, in accordance with his personal inclination, from the texts than what they really imply. Was the preacher inclined to metaphysics, these teachings were metaphysically tinged; was he inclined to ethics, social or scientific theories, they were impressed with the respective stamps. The sermons, we must not forget, were delivered orally and later

written down. They were thus, to a great extent, inspirational only, which fact involves an element of fiction and description, and that affected the content. As a result of this heterogeneity of both form and character, the homiletic literature produced in Germany resembles the Agada of old and is as distinct a literary species as the former, though its nature cannot be exactly described. As all modern productions, it is, in contradistinction to the Agada of old, individual and personal, while the former was an expression of the national views and beliefs. Yet, even the individuality of the modern sermon is not always complete, for since all sermons have a general aim, it occurs often, when a definite tendency prevails in a certain period, that a pattern is evolved by the exigencies of time and circumstances and is followed by the majority of preachers. Thus, the homiletic works of a great number of the German liberal rabbis and also of many who called themselves conservatives during the greater part of the last century, constantly emphasize the ethical character of Judaism and lay stress upon its humanitarian teachings to the neglect of its other features. Only the outstanding preachers succeeded in escaping the influence of that pattern and in presenting in their works their own view of the important phases of Jewish teachings and their conception of Judaism.

The development of preaching during the Modern Period in the Jewries of Eastern Europe, especially in the Polish-Russian center, presents a different aspect. In those countries, Jewish life was for a long time not deeply affected by the new conditions of the times, and the old forms of that life continued to exist. Jewish learning and study were wide-spread even among the masses, and piety and observance of the law were still the rule in the daily conduct of every Jew. Preaching and the sermon could not, therefore, attain that prominent position in the religious life of those Jews as in that of their brethren in Western Europe. In fact, the rabbis of the communities were not required to preach at all except on two Sabbaths of the year, the one before Passover known as *Shabbat ha-Gadol* and one before the Day of Atonement, *Shabbat Teshubah*, and even on these two Sabbaths, they exhibited their Talmudic knowledge rather than their ability to preach. This function was discharged primarily by special officials known as *Maggidim*.

Still, we note from the second half of the eighteenth century on an ascendancy of the sermon in the life of the Jews of Eastern Europe. Learning and study, though as yet prevalent, did decrease perceptibly

among the masses, especially in certain parts of Poland, such as the Ukraine and the neighboring provinces. Again, the struggle for existence waged by most of the Jews in those countries on account of the exceedingly poor economic conditions, prevented many of those who did master in their youth the mysteries of the Talmud from continuing its study, and they also craved for a lighter form of instruction, and as a result there arose a need for preaching in many Jewish communities in Eastern Europe. The need was satisfied by a number of *Maggidim* who devoted themselves to that art. Many of them who could not obtain permanent positions became itinerant preachers who toured Jewish communities and addressed the people gathered in the synagogue for afternoon and evening services during the interval between the two (Ben Minhah le-Ma'arib). The supply created an increased demand, and thus preaching became more popular. With the increase of the popularity of preaching and the number of preachers, there was also a marked increase in the number of homiletic works; many of these *Maggidim* thought it worth while to write down their sermons and collect them in books and thus an extensive *Drush* (homiletic) literature was created. This literature produced in Eastern Europe is distinguished from the similar literature of Western Europe not only by its content but also by its language; the latter is written almost entirely in the European languages, mainly in German, and the former, exclusively in Hebrew, though the sermons were delivered in the Judaeo-German or the Yiddish language spoken by the Jews of these countries. It was only late in the last century that some preachers began to write and print their sermons in the Yiddish vernacular.

The contents of these sermons up to the middle of the last century differed but little from the type prevalent in the late Mediaeval ages. It consisted primarily in explaining difficult passages of the Bible and the Midrash and in deriving religious lessons from these explanations. Often the explanations themselves were the main purpose of the preacher who wanted to display his keen-mindedness in solving difficulties and inconsistencies in the Bible and Midrash. That the interpretation of the Bible, under the circumstances, did not aim at a simple explanation in accordance with the plain meaning of the passages goes without saying, for the purpose was to discover some hidden meaning not foreseen in advance. If the text quoted did not apparently present any difficulty, it was the business of the preacher to make it difficult by various devices and then by a happy

interpretation remove the difficulty and thus give a new meaning to the passage. The desired interpretation of the text or the solution of the difficulties was not offered immediately but in a circuitous way by quoting several other Biblical texts and Agadic passages which were apparently also difficult, but on interpretation of the last passage all was illuminated. The sermon in such cases seldom contained a central theme, but consisted primarily of a string of short expository homilies loosely connected resembling a chain of many links.

This type of sermon also resembled the Agada in its construction and partly in its method but is more complicated than the latter. The Agada is often distinguished by simplicity while the *Drush* literature followed the Halakic method of study, the *pilpulistic*, and applied it for its purposes. It also lacks the poetic quality of the Agada, for with few exceptions it is mainly intellectualistic. Yet we must not minimize its value entirely as well as its influence on Jewish life of the day. The sermons, in spite of the features described above, were permeated with a deep religious spirit and the explanation of the texts and the lessons derived from them inspired the auditors to a greater observance of the religious and ethical precepts. They especially inculcated in the hearts of the people the love of Torah, for the glorification of its value and study was the most popular theme of the preachers. The influence of the conditions of the time, though not in great evidence, was not entirely absent. The preachers often devoted themselves to chastising the audience for their neglect of certain religious and ethical duties. Nor were oratorical devices lacking; illustrations were used and even attempts at dramatization and spirited descriptions of scenes were frequently made. Such features, however, which characterized the oral sermons are but little in evidence in the literature; the writers were not experts in literary expressions and the Hebrew homiletic works are from the aspect of form much inferior to those produced in Germany.

From the second half of the nineteenth century, the East-European type of preaching assumed a more modern aspect which is correspondingly reflected in the homiletic works. The influence of modern conditions had gradually penetrated Jewish life, enlightenment had spread, and secular education had become frequent, and as a result rigorous piety began to slacken and a laxity of religious observances began to manifest itself among the Jewish masses. Again, due to changes in economic and cultural conditions, new

problems arose; the upper stratum of Jewish society in Russia evinced a tendency to assimilation and demands for religious reforms were voiced in the new Hebrew literature and in the recently founded Hebrew press. All these changes affected to a degree the character of the sermon and it became inspirational rather than expository and interpretative. On the one hand, the pious preachers reacted to the new situation and endeavored to stem the tide of deviation from the old path of life with the best means at their disposal. There arose preachers of great ability who thundered from the pulpit denunciations against the Maskilim and the would-be reformers, condemned the new tendencies in thought and life and called the people to the study and observance of the Torah. On the other hand, there appeared a new type of preachers who were affected by secular education, by the new Hebrew literature, and by the new spirit of the Haskalah and they employed the *Derashah* as a means of improving Jewish life. They advocated changes in the method of Jewish education, improvements in economic occupations, and generally spoke on the topics of the day. They employed texts and interpreted them for their purposes but not in the casuistic method of the older *Darshanim*. They utilized description and dramatization more frequently, and in general placed the sermon on a higher rhetorical and oratorical level. Both of these new tendencies are reflected in the homiletic literature but unfortunately to a limited extent. Comparatively few works representing the inspirational sermon of the religious as well as of the modern variety reached us from this period before the eighties of the last century. One of the greatest and most effective preachers of that time was the *Kelmer Maggid* (the preacher of Kelm, a town in Lithuania), who toured Russia and Poland for many years and delivered thousands of sermons but never collected them in book form.

From the foregoing, we can gain a conception of the character of the two types of homiletic literature produced, during the Modern Period, in the two great centers of Jewish life. We shall now proceed to obtain a closer view of its nature, character, and form by surveying some of its representative specimens which reflect the tendencies and views embodied in the entire literature.

113. JACOB DUBNO

One of the outstanding preachers in Poland at the beginning of the Modern Period, i.e., the second half of the eighteenth century,

was Jacob Kranz, or Dubno (d. 1815). He was born in Zetel, a small town in the province of Grodno, Lithuania. While still a youth, he showed great ability as a preacher and in the manner of the day, he acted as an itinerant *Maggid* for several years until he was appointed community preacher at Dubno where he lived for eighteen years. He was later called to Samocz in Poland, where he resided until his death, but the name *Dubner Maggid* clung to him. His sermons were collected and published posthumously by one of his sons in collaboration with Abraham Baer Flahm, his favorite pupil. There are several collections, the most important one being the *Ohel Ya'akov* (The Tent of Jacob) containing sermons and homilies based on the Pentateuch; the others are *Kol Ya'akov* on the Five Scrolls, and *Kokab Ya'akov* on the *Haftarot*. He also wrote an ethical book entitled *Sefer ha-Midot* (The Book of Virtues) modelled after *Hobot ha-Lebabot* of Baḥya Ibn Pakuda.

We called Dubno's works collections of sermons, but the name sermon in the narrower meaning of the word can be applied to their contents only by courtesy. They are in reality homiletic commentaries on the Pentateuch, *Haftarot*, and the Scrolls, containing short homilies on selected texts from these Biblical books. The homilies, on the whole, do not rise much above the type of the homiletics current in the period, the aim of which was to expound difficult Biblical or Midrashic passages and draw from them religious and moral lessons. They are though distinguished by brevity and on account of that also by simplicity. As a rule, they seldom contain more than two texts, a Biblical and a Midrashic or Talmudic, but at times several of the latter. The Agadic passages are used as a means for the interpretation of the Biblical texts. However, these qualities, important as they are, would not have made Dubno famous, nor his works household books with every *Darshan* or *Maggid* for generations. His homilies possess a distinct and almost unique quality which singles them out from the entire homiletic literature of the century, namely the excessive number of parables (*Meshalim*) they contain. There is hardly a homily without a *Mashal*. Dubno was a master of parables and without ever having been introduced to the study of psychological pedagogy, he instinctively knew the value of the apperceptive method in the process of learning and employed it to great advantage. His *Meshalim* are not illustrations of a pre-conceived theory of exposition, but serve as the basis from which the exposition is evolved. It is related that when he was once asked

how he could so successfully adopt his *Meshalim* to the subjects which they illustrated, his answer was the following *Mashal*. Once a group of archers were practicing target shooting. A stranger who passed by noticed that a young archer continuously struck the center of the circle in the target with his arrow. His curiosity was aroused and he asked the archer how he attained such skill. "You err, my friend," answered the latter; "I am not skilful at all; I merely shoot at random and wherever the arrow falls, I draw a circle around it." Likewise, said Dubno, I think of a *Mashal* and adapt my subject of the discourse to it. However, the modesty of this preacher really illustrates his skill, for he always thought in vivid pictures, and when he applied them to his expositions, they were presented so clearly that even the uninitiated grasped them. Moreover, his *Mashalim* were drawn from life and they display keen observation of the Jewish and the general life of his time in all aspects. Besides, they possess an artistic quality of great excellence and are really miniature stories.

By way of illustration, we will cite here the contents of two of his homilies where a *Mashal* is used and applied. Verse 2 in chapter IV in Deuteronomy reads, "Ye shall not add unto the word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish aught from it, that ye may keep the commandments of the Lord, your God, which I command ye." Dubno, in endeavoring to explain the deeper meaning of the commandment, especially the injunction not to add precepts, quotes a Talmudic statement which reads as follows: "Whoever says that God is lax or liberal (Heb. Watran) in dealing out justice or in the institution of laws, may his bowels become lax or torn out." (Yerushalmi, Shekalim, Ch. V.) Our preacher then points out two difficulties in the Rabbinic statement. The first is, why did the rabbis choose this particular curse, and the second, why should the man who praises God for His liberality be punished at all? He explains this by a parable. Suppose a man, says he, possesses five hundred silver vessels, and yet he refuses to lend one of them to a friend. Apparently we would consider him grossly illiberal. But when he explains that each vessel is only one of its kind used for a different purpose and that he has no duplicates, and moreover, that all these apparently different utensils are really part of one wonderfully-wrought and constructed vessel, his illiberality would be excusable, for were he to lend one of the utensils, then the entire mechanism of the large vessel would become defective. Similarly, the entire Torah with its six hundred and thirteen precepts is one wonderfully

constructed mechanism in which each precept performs a certain function and cannot be substituted by the other. Any diminution as well as any addition would impair the entire mechanism and destroy its purpose and function, hence the injunction. It is, continues the preacher, the following comparison which is aimed at by the rabbis in their statement wherein they curse the one who imputes liberality to God in the giving of His laws. The human body is composed of numerous organs and parts, among them the intestines which are many yards long; yet each inch of these intestines is necessary for a definite function and cannot be cut off. The Torah, say the rabbis, is of a similar nature; and if one complains of the multiplicity of the *Mitzvot* and considers it an undue liberality on the part of God, let him think of the intestines, of their excessive length, and of the usefulness of every inch of that length.¹ The meaning of the Biblical injunction not to add nor to diminish anything from the Torah becomes then clear as well as the Rabbinic statement, which apparently looked difficult, by the application of the parable and comparison. We also obtain a fine conception of the Torah from a traditional point of view.

In another place, Dubno illustrates by an apt *Mashal* the state of mind of the prophet Isaiah at the moment of his inauguration when the divine *court* was revealed to him in a vision, as related in Chapter VI of his book. Verse 6 of that chapter opens with an explanation, "And I said, woe is me! for I am undone." Says Dubno, we shall explain the exclamation by the following parable. A Jewish liquor distiller who lived in a village was considered by his fellow-Jews a man of learning though he was ignorant. The reason for such deference was that, while he was unlettered, he managed to pick up some scraps of knowledge by reading the *Zeena u-Reena* (a homiletic commentary on the Bible in Judaeo-German, see Vol. II, p. 634) and also by reading the Hebrew calendar. The latter accomplishment enabled him to supply information on the exact date of the festivals. The deference paid him by the less informed Jews made him proud and one day he revealed to his wife that he is a great scholar and cited as proof the esteem he is held in by the Jews of the village. Some time later, he chanced to visit a large Jewish community, and upon entering the synagogue he saw a group of men studying the Talmud and heard them discuss heatedly its contents while he understood nothing. He then returned home crest-

¹ *Ohel Ya'akov*, Part V, p. 16.

fallen and humbly confessed to his wife his error. Heretofore, he said, living among these villagers, I considered myself a scholar, but on meeting really learned men I came to recognize my ignorance and now I know that I am an untutored villager. Similarly, continues Dubno, Isaiah who was wise, rich, and of royal descent considered himself a leader of men even in Jerusalem. But when he saw in vision the splendor of the heavenly *court*, and the multitude of angels and Seraphim who trembled before the glory of God, his real state was revealed to him and in humility he exclaimed, "Woe is me, I am undone, for I am a man of unclean lips and dwell in the midst of people of unclean lips."² In this way, Dubno taught his people to understand the deeper meaning of the Bible and Agada, and generations listened to his parables repeated by numerous preachers, enjoyed their art, and imbibed indirectly the teaching imparted through them.

114. JOSEPH HAYYIM KARO

The type of preaching represented by Dubno was continued during a large part of the nineteenth century and changed only later. Joseph Hayyim Karo is the outstanding representative of the more modern form of preaching which became prevalent during the second half of the century. He was rabbi in several Jewish communities in Prussian Poland, and later in Wloclawek near Warsaw. He possessed a secular education and was versed in Jewish philosophic and ethical literature and was also acquainted with modern ideas and views of life and conduct. A large part of his sermons were collected in two volumes, each divided in two parts entitled *Kol Omer Kro* (The Voice said Cry, taken from Isaiah, XL, 6 and with reference to his name, Karo).

The sermons are religious addresses, for they have a central theme which is well developed and they are logically constructed. The purpose of most of the sermons is to inculcate teachings regarding broad and fundamental concepts of Judaism of a purely religious and ethical nature, rather than the urging of observance of certain precepts. They also deal with the love and value of the Torah, the importance of unity in Jewish life, of the necessity of remedying certain evils in social life, especially that of slander and kindred subjects. The texts placed at the beginning of the sermon, both the Biblical and Agadic, contain the theme and the lesson which is to be

² Passage taken from *Kokab Yakob* p. 33b.

evolved after due explanation and exposition, but in the course of the discourse many more quotations and passages are cited and expounded.

We cite by way of illustration the content of one of these sermons which was delivered on the Sabbath before the first of the month (Rosh Hodesh) and the text is the prayer of Rab preceding the benediction of *Rosh Hodesh*. In that prayer the congregation asks God to grant them long life, a life of peace, a life of goodness, a life of blessing, a life of sustenance, a life of strength, a life of fear of sin, a life without *Bushah* and *Kelimah* (shame and humiliation), a life of riches and honor, a life of love of Torah and the fear of God. The discourse opens with the presentation of a question: Why is the word "life" repeated before each request? The answer to this question which forms the crux of the sermon begins with a definition of the term life. The essence of life, says our preacher, consists in the performance of a definite function by the being which is said to live, to which function it was determined by its nature. When that function is not performed, the being ceases to live though it may still exist. Life then is activity along a certain direction consistent with the nature of man. We are now able, he continues, to understand the repetition of the word "life" in the prayer, for there are different kinds of life, some which we may call life, but which are in reality mere existence. First, the congregation asks for "long life," meaning a life full of activity which makes it worthwhile, namely of a religious and ethical nature. It is such activities which make even a short span of time long, for each day man lives and not merely exists. This request is a general one, followed by particularizations. The next request is for a life of peace. Peace in society does not always mean that all members of the group must always act in the same way. On the contrary, they may vary in their conduct, but the aim should be one and all pursuits should lead to harmonious cooperation. Again, the request also includes the attaining of personal peace within one's own life, namely between the passions of the body and the striving of the soul. By goodness is meant not material plenty, for that is only relative and not absolute, but constant spiritual progress, and the congregation prays that God may grant it the ability to become spiritually and morally better from day to day.

The request for a life of blessing is interpreted symbolically by comparing the Hebrew word *Berakah* with the Hebrew word *Brēkah*

(a pool), namely that God may grant us the means to share our goods and benefits with others just as the pool waters the fields and meadows. A life of strengthening our bones signifies power for combating the evil passions within us. The request for a life without shame and humiliation is best understood by the definition of the terms. Shame is merely the act of placing one in a relatively inferior position, while humiliation lowers him absolutely. The request then is that God should grant us a life wherein there should be no inferiority in any way or manner. As for a life of riches and honor we ask for, we must understand that riches do not always bring honor but often jealousy and ill-feeling on the part of our fellow-men. Only when one is liberal with his wealth and performs good deeds with it, then honor accompanies its possession. It is for the will to do good with riches that the congregation prays for. The last request for a life of love of Torah is self-explanatory. This rather short sermon arouses our admiration for the wealth of noble ideas it evolves out of a prayer so frequently recited.

115. *THE OUTSTANDING HOMILETISTS OF GERMANY*

As pointed out, preaching became the most important religious expression of German Jewry and the center of the synagogue or Temple service. It follows, therefore, that the number of homiletic works in German produced during the last century should be exceedingly large, and in fact it is very extensive. Almost every rabbi of note thought it his duty to publish a volume or two of his collected sermons. These works differ from the East-European preachers, not only in the language in which they were written, but, as said, in content and form. As a rule, they have only one text and preferably a Biblical one, which is used as a nucleus for the development of the theme of the address. The subject is logically developed into constituent parts. The contents aim always to derive a religious lesson from the text which is applied to the conditions of the day and it is seldom expository. Most of the preachers of the time saw in the sermon a means to strengthen the waning religious spirit and endeavored to inculcate it in the hearts of the auditors. As a result, the contents of a large part of the sermons are overwhelmingly inspirational for all means were used by the rabbis to make their sermons effective, such as exalted language and poetic and dramatic description. The religion preached, however, is, on the whole, of a general nature. The emphasis is primarily laid on

the feeling of religiosity and the deepening of religious consciousness and not on the observance of religion in practical life. The only practical aspect of religion stressed is that of prayer. On account of the general pattern, the homiletic works possess the quality of sameness, for it is the specific and the individual which give rise to differences and diversity.

A small number of preachers devoted themselves also to teaching and utilized their addresses for imparting knowledge on various aspects of Jewish life, literature, and thought, and thus enriched their auditors spiritually and intellectually. Others again, especially those representing the liberal or the reform tendency in Jewry in its later phase, to whom the essence of Judaism consisted more in its ethical and humanitarian teachings, emphasized this aspect in their sermons. Still others, philosophically minded, attempted to make their sermon the vehicle of philosophic ideas and endeavored to find in certain Biblical passages or in definite Jewish teaching a counterpart to these views and ideas.

As representatives of the type of preachers whose constant theme was the revival of the religious spirit in the heart of the Jews of Germany and Austria, we select Gotthold Salomon (1784-1862) and Isaac Noah Mannheimer (1793-1865). The first was a moderate reformer and served as rabbi of the Temple at Hamburg from its opening in 1818 until 1857. He was a prolific writer of sermons and the number reaches two hundred and seventy, the larger part of which is included in several published collections. Salomon, though an advocate of changes in Judaism was a deeply religious man and he earnestly believed that the changes in the service introduced by the Temple and the reforms later advocated by the Rabbinical conferences would actually help to strengthen the religious consciousness of the modern Jew. He devoted a lifetime to this task and most of his sermons deal with this subject in one aspect or another. He did not neglect, however, the ethical and humanitarian phases of Judaism as well as the daily life of the Jew, and many of his sermons treat of these subjects.

The method employed by him in his sermons was a logical one and they were made more effective by a summary of the discussion given by the author in the introduction instead of at the end. Thus, in a sermon preached on the theme, "Good Works Must Be Completed," based on the text taken from Exodus, Ch. XL, 33-34, where the details of the completion of the Tabernacle are related, Salomon

introduces his discourse with a summary of the thoughts developed therein. Four things, says he, are necessary for the completion of good deeds: (1) the right material; (2) the right form; (3) the right agent; and (4) the right purpose, a division which corresponds to the four Aristotelian causes. In a masterly way he evolves these phases from the text. The introduction to a sermon preached on the eve of the Day of Atonement, having for its theme, "Repentance and Life," contains the following series of analogies between the conduct of the Jew in the synagogue and in life. Here (i.e., in the synagogue), says the preacher,—prayer, there (in life)—devotion; here—abstemiousness, there—moderation; here—confession, there—right knowledge (in German there is a play on the words *Bekennniss* and *Erkennniss*); here—humility, there—modesty; here—exercise of repentance, there—words of kindness; here—remembrance of the dead, there—thought of death; here—the recital of beliefs, there—the belief itself. With such and other devices did the great preacher inculcate his religious teachings and his works form fine specimens of religious literature.

Isaac Noah Mannheimer was rabbi in Vienna for a period of thirty-two years from 1825 to 1857, and the influence he exerted on the Jews of the Austrian capital was exceptionally great. It was he who organized the Jewish community in that city and made it a model of Jewish organized life. He was very conservative in his religious views, and while he was thoroughly modern and believed in beautifying the services, he did not approve of the innovations of the reformers and was a great force in reconciling the traditional type of Judaism with modern conditions.

Mannheimer preached hundreds of sermons of which only a few were collected and only one volume of *Vorträge* was published posthumously. This volume testifies to his ability and is an exceptionally fine specimen of modern homiletic literature. The fundamental characteristic of his sermons is their deep religiosity. Of this rabbi it can be verily said that he was God-intoxicated and the religious spirit with which he was wholly permeated is embodied in his works. He used texts, mostly Biblical and at times also Midrashic, but they really do not unfold the theme developed in the discourse and serve more as symbols for his thought than nuclei. His thoughts are primarily his own. His sermons express his personality and the following declaration indicates its religious depth. "My activity," says Mannheimer, "can go only so far as the power of

my body and my hands which are often tied, will allow. But, as for speaking, I can speak as long as there is one man to hear me, and I will speak until my soul will depart from my body."⁸ In all his sermons, there is the prophetic ring and the voice of the man who is on intimate terms with his audience, who chastises them and yet loves them. The form suits the content. It is often cast in conversational form, but it always retains the tone of conviction. There is little of the dramatic in the sermons, but they express the force of the soul of the speaker, who feels that he speaks the word of God. The force is embodied in the words which must be read and cannot be otherwise transmitted.

116. ADOLPH JELLINEK

The representative of the type of preaching which aimed at both inspiration and instruction was Adolph Jellinek (1821-1893). He succeeded Mannheimer as rabbi and preacher of the Jewish community in Vienna, in 1857, and held that position for thirty-six years until the day of his death. He was also, as we have seen, a noted Jewish scholar contributing much to various branches of Jewish learning, and he utilized his wide and all-embracing Jewish scholarship in his preaching. He published three large collections of sermons and nine smaller ones besides numerous single addresses and lectures. The number of all his published sermons reaches to over two hundred.

His addresses are distinguished primarily by their intuitive quality, as well as by brilliancy of thought which scintillates through every page and section. They by no means lack oratorical forcefulness and elegance of diction, but it is these qualities which raise them above the time in which they were uttered and elevate them to fine specimens of religious and ethical literature of all ages. Jellinek, as a rule, used one Biblical text, but he also employed along with it, in an indirect way, numerous Rabbinic passages which he interpreted skilfully and derived from them most unexpected teachings and ideas, which he harmoniously incorporated into the themes of his addresses. As a result, the reader, like the auditor in his day, is thus not only instructed by learning the text of these passages, but is enriched by the wealth of ideas unfolded for him by the interpretations of a master thinker. Jellinek belonged to the Conservative party in Jewry but was thoroughly imbued with the modern

⁸ *Vorträge*, Part I, p. 125.

spirit and his sermons display, therefore, one of the best attempts to reconcile traditional Judaism with the views and concepts of the modern world. Each sermon embodies a part of his enlightened but thoroughly Jewish conception of Judaism and its traditions, and there is, therefore, no better way to describe the character of the whole than by presenting the contents of several of its parts.

We shall select his two sermons on Zion, preached in the summer of 1862, at a time when the current of assimilation among the Jews in the Austrian capital was at its height and loyalty to Austrian nationalism and patriotism was the highest creed. And at that moment, Jellinek stepped forth and preached to his rich congregants of their duty to love Zion, the land of their fathers, with no less warmth than their fatherland. His text is taken from Deuteronomy Ch. XII, 9 which reads: "For ye are not as yet come to the rest and to the inheritance which the Lord, your God, giveth ye." His theme is the answer to the question, what does Zion mean to the Jews of the present time? He opens his address with an assertion that his and his party's loyalty to and love for the respective fatherlands, in which the Jews happen to live, are no less than that of the people who obliterated all mention of Zion from the prayer-books as well as from their lives. And yet, he proclaims, "I declare that every Jewish heart must beat fast for Zion and be inspired by and enthused for Jerusalem." He proceeds to prove his declaration from the very nature of Judaism. Many of the ideas of Judaism, says he, were from its very beginning, destined to become the share of all humanity. It, therefore, contains two phases, a particularistic one expressed by the precepts and the ordinances given to Israel alone, and a universalistic intending to unite the Jews with the rest of humanity. These two contrary phases were in evidence through the entire Jewish history and explain many of the historical phenomena of their life and also the hatred of the nations towards them. They were necessary supplements to each other, for the ideals of Judaism needed a special people devoted to their development and preservation, and hence the need of the particular phase; again, Jews could not be too entirely separated, for then they would not have exerted any influence upon humanity. Palestine, therefore, was the proper land for the Jews, for while its boundaries are well defined by mountains, seas, and deserts which separate it from the rest of the world, it is on the other hand, the central point of three continents and in the midst of nations, as the prophet says of Jerusa-

lem in the name of God: "This is Jerusalem; I have set it in the midst of nations and countries that are round about her." (Ezekiel, V, 5.) How, then, concludes Jellinek, can we forget that land which was so inherently connected with the essential nature of our religion and which still reminds us of the double nature and purpose of our mission and destiny, namely to be both ourselves and an integral part of all humanity? How can we and how dare we forget Zion without obliterating also the essential features of Judaism?

The preacher, however, feels that this argument is too abstract to make an emotional appeal for Zion to his auditors and turns to the historical role of Palestine. With remarkable pathos he draws a glowing picture of the place Palestine held in Jewish life throughout history from the very beginning to modern times. By numerous quotations from the Midrashim and Mediaeval literature he shows that there was never a period during which Israel ever forgot his ancient land, and that during all the long centuries of exile the Jew always turned his eyes eastward. This age-long yearning for Zion, says he, is beautifully described by the rabbis in a striking comparison which reads as follows: "Just like the dove, though robbed of its young, repeatedly returns to its nest, so Israel, though the Temple was destroyed, never ceased to make pilgrimages to the Holy Land during the time of the three important festivals of the year (Shalosh Regolim)." He further unrolls before us the pages of the entire Jewish literature and shows that there is hardly a great work which does not bear some relation to Zion. He then turns to the audience and says, "You Israelites visit ancient cities, ruins of castles, where robber barons carried on their nefarious deeds; you admire the very spots where many of your ancestors were struck down by the former owners of these castles, while you neglect to visit Palestine, the land with which the entire Jewish history is intimately connected." But Palestine, continues our preacher, must be dear to the Jews not only as the land of the past, but also as one of the future. The hope for Zion is inherently connected with the future of Judaism and the fate of the Jews. It was Jellinek's belief that even if the Jews of Europe attained emancipation, yet prejudice and hatred would not cease until Judaism shall once more be planted in its historical place of birth and from there its teachings shall go forth to enthuse humanity with the striving for the realization of its great ideals in life.

This glorious and pregnant thought which is only referred to at

the end of his first address on Zion is most fully developed in the second speech. The theme of that sermon is the assertion that the more a Jew loves Zion, the more loyal he is to the land of his birth. He proves this in the following manner. Real patriotism, says he, is expressed in the desire of a citizen to make his country free, just, and humane. If so, says he, Zion can serve as a pattern for such a model country, and can also be a source of inspiration for the stimulation of such feelings in present day life. He then shows by citations from Jewish laws and from Rabbinic literature how Palestine was free, just, and humane. The remembrance of Palestine, therefore, says he, can inspire every Jew to strive with all his heart to realize all these ideals in the government of the country he lives in. But here again, it is not only the memory of the role of Palestine in the past which should inspire us but primarily the hope for the future. He explains his idea by giving the interpretation of the Messianic ideal. The Messianic Age must come, he believes. The meaning of that age is the realization of the high ideals of Judaism, namely justice, loving kindness, and peace, in the life of the nations. When that age shall arrive, Israel will obtain his land with the consent of the nations in order that it become the spiritual center of the world. But before such a state could come, much spiritual progress must be accomplished in the world. He illustrates this thought by a beautiful interpretation of a Midrashic passage. Say the rabbis, "Messiah will not come until all souls which are contained in the heavenly abode, called *Guf*, will be spent, namely incarnated in living bodies on earth."⁴ This, says Jellinek, means that Messiah cannot come until all the divine ideals which animate man, symbolically called "souls" will be realized in life. "Hence," he says, "in order that Judaism attain its destiny, the Jews must cooperate with the nations of the world for an increase of freedom, justice, and humanitarianism in the various countries in which they reside." There is, therefore, no antagonism between the Jewish love for Zion and the love for their fatherland, for one supplements the other. Furthermore, since the Messianic Age cannot be attained except by spiritual progress, Israel, whose destiny it is to be the central figure of that age, must lead in that progress. Consequently, it is the duty of the Jews to live a life of the highest ethical and religious type, so that they may be emulated by the best among the nations and thus help the ultimate coming of the Messianic age. He concludes with

⁴ Talmud Bable, *Abodah Zara*, 5a.

pathos, "Israelites, let Zion be dear to your hearts, both its past and its future. Fear not that you will be accused of a lack of patriotism and be considered as strangers in the lands in which you live. Nay, go out, and tell the nations, 'when we remember of the past of Zion, we only think of a pattern for your perfection, and Zion's future is a stimulant both for our own moral perfection as well as for that of humanity as a whole, for which we must all cooperate.'"

The contents of these two sermons are a specimen of the type of preaching of Jellinek and of the literary value of his collections. There is in the sermons much of the fancy of the visionary and much of the idealism which in the light of the present situation seem to us woefully naive. But there is also much of pure religion and of intense Jewish nationalism which can stand the test of time. And who knows whether that dream of the inspired preacher cannot at some future time become a reality when the present raging wave of animosity towards the Jews will pass and the nations of the world will once more assume their march toward spiritual progress. Time has accomplished things which neither Jellinek nor even his contemporary, Moses Hess, the first prophet of Jewish nationalism, foresaw. I refer to the political and economic achievements of the Jews in Palestine. The future may bring the realization of the full dream—the Holy Land becoming the spiritual center of the world. Such sermons are typical of Jellinek's instructive preaching, for they contain large segments of his view of Judaism which was a blend of the traditional and the modern.

He also devoted himself to the exposition of the nature and the character of the great literary treasures of the Jews, the Bible and the Talmud. Thus, he delivered five addresses on the Torah, which he later printed in book form entitled *Einleitung in die Thora*, where he gives a comprehensive conception of the ethical and religious teachings of the Books of Moses as well as an interpretation of the value of the precepts. Again, he preached two sermons on the Talmud, the first devoted to the essence and the influence of the Talmud, and the second to the relation of its teachings to modern problems. The reader not only obtains a fair conception of this great treasure-house of Jewish knowledge, especially of the Agada, but he is also imbued with the love for this literary monument of the Jews, with which every page is saturated. In similar manner are single Biblical books, which were taken as subjects of sermons, treated by him, such as the Five Scrolls and others. Nor were other phases of Jewish life

neglected, and as an illustration can serve us his collection of three sermons entitled, *Das Weib in Israel*, in which the position of the Jewish woman is discussed historically under all aspects, social, moral, religious, and cultural. The homiletic works of Jellinek are thus not only a source of Jewish inspiration but of instruction as well.

To this school of conservative homiletists belonged also Michael Sachs (Sec. 89) who was a noted Jewish scholar and possessed a poetic soul. He was known in his time as an effective speaker and his sermons were distinguished by the peculiar charm of his oratory and earnestness of his deep religious feeling. The collection of his addresses, published posthumously by David Rosen, lacks the vividness and oratorical quality with which the speeches were delivered, but it retains the poetic glow which animated the soul of the speaker. The sermons are imbued with a deep religious spirit akin to that of Mannheimer's and are on the whole of the inspirational type. Their value is enhanced by the beauty and elegance of the style.

117. LUDWIG PHILIPPSON AND HIS CONTEMPORARIES

The sermon occupied the central point in the service of the reformed faction in Jewry. Consequently, the number of homiletic works by the preachers of this tendency in Judaism is exceedingly large, and cannot be surveyed in detail. On the whole, they possess a certain monotonous character, for they emphasize mainly the ethical and humanitarian phases of Judaism. Several preachers, however, rose above the general level and the collections of their sermons possess distinguishing qualities. These are Ludwig Philippson, Samuel Holdheim, and Abraham Geiger. The first, who was, as noted above, (Sec. 98) a scholar and thinker and in general a very prolific writer, was also a great and effective preacher. He was a moderate reformer, deeply imbued with Jewish traditions, but also one who strove to renovate Jewish religious life and bring it into harmony with modern life to a great degree. He looked upon the sermon as the most suitable means for conveying religious teaching and inculcating loyalty to Judaism. He, therefore, devoted to Jewish homiletics much of his energy and endeavored to supply it with a theoretical basis. For this purpose, he edited and published a special periodical entitled *Israelitische Predigt und Schul Magazin* (1834-36), where he published a number of essays on the theory of sermonizing.

In one of these he develops his views of the purpose and character of the sermon. According to him, the Jewish sermon of modern

times must be neither a moral discourse nor a modern *Derashah*. Those preachers who emphasize only the moral teachings of Judaism do not fulfill their functions. They forget that it is their duty to inspire the people with a desire to observe the ceremonies and to enthruse them with devotion for the Jewish religion, and they err in thinking that morality alone can bestow blessedness upon man. Ethical teachings can be effective only when permeated with the glowing warmth of religion, of fear of God and His knowledge. Similarly, those preachers whose sermons are only *Derashot* given in a European language likewise miss the aim, for it must also be modern in content as well as in form. As for the character of the sermon, he asserts that it must not only appeal to the intellect but even more to the heart and to the imagination. It must not be a philosophical discourse, nor an exegetic study, nor a critical discussion, but an instructive, inspirational address, and by all means not obtruse and above the comprehension of the masses.⁵ In spite of his insistence upon distinction between the *Derashah* and the sermon he advises preachers to employ Rabbinic texts and quotations in order to enrich the contents of the address and to supply it with Jewish color. He also advises them to widen the range of subjects, saying that the Bible, the Midrashim, Jewish life in all its phases, outstanding events in Jewish history, religious ceremonies—all these can supply themes for the sermon.

His homiletic works which consist of three large collections of sermons under the name *Siloah* (with reference to the pool of the Shiloah mentioned in Isaiah, Ch. VII), and of numerous single sermons published at various times illustrate his own theory adequately. They are both inspirational and instructive and deal with the entire Jewish life in all its aspects as well as with the entire content of the Jewish religion. His sermons deal with ceremonies, dogmas, laws, and Jewish history as well as with religious devotion and piety.

Samuel Holdheim, who was the representative radical reformer, was also a prolific writer of sermons, three large collections of which were published besides many single addresses. The last collection, *Predigten über die jüdische Religion* is in four volumes. His sermons are stamped with the keen-mindedness with which this rabbi was endowed and display brilliancy of ideas and logical development, but they are not inspirational. They are further permeated by a

⁵ *Predigt und Schul Magazin*, Vol. II, p. 25.

polemic spirit against traditional institutions, and are often devoted to the establishment of his radical religious views.

Abraham Geiger, the greatest leader of the Reform movement in Germany and an outstanding Jewish scholar, was an active preacher, but, due to his deep interest in scholarship, did not write down his sermons and only seven of them are included in his *Nachgelassene Schriften*. More than half are addresses delivered on patriotic occasions, such as the king's birthday and similar events, and are therefore, no indication of the character of his homiletic productions. The others possess an intellectual character and little of the emotional. In one sermon which has for its theme the spiritual life of Israel he employs the divine attributes of existing (Nimza), wise (Hakam) and potent (Yakel) as devices for his ideas by applying them to the Jewish people. The first signifies its continued long existence, the second the rationality of its religion, and the third, the spiritual and religious activity.

There are among the hundreds of collections of sermons produced in Western Europe, during the last century, a number of excellent literary quality and of permanent value, but the very large number sets limits to our survey. We may add that the imposing quantity indicates the important place which the homiletic literature held in Jewish life during the nineteenth century.

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